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THE ETHICS OF ST. PAUL

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THE ETHICS OF ST. PAUL

BY

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AUTHOR OF 'A SHORT HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY'

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GLASGOW

JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS

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PREFACE

THE theology of St. Paul has found exponents many and able; the ethics of St. Paul has not been so fortunate. Some reference to the moral teaching of the apostle is made by most of the modern treatises on New Testament theology as well as by several of the recent works upon Christian ethics; but, with the exception of a small volume by Ernesti, entitled *Die Ethik des Apostels Paulus*, published in 1868, and one or two papers in English and German periodicals, there is a singular dearth of writings specially devoted to this theme.

No one can read the epistles of Paul without perceiving the ethical character of a large portion of their teaching, and noticing how even the great theological principles themselves have a profound moral import. In these days when the ethics of Christianity is claiming attention, and when men are asking what has the Gospel to say upon the great moral and social problems, it is only natural that an attempt should be made to ascertain the attitude to the practical questions of life of one who was the first, as he was the greatest exponent of the mind of Christ. It has been said that for many thinkers "St. Paul is as obsolete as Tertullian or Calvin." Whether this be an exaggeration or not, it may be that, for an age impatient of the technical language of dogma, the practical teaching of the apostle with regard to the conduct

of life may have a note of appeal and do something to convince the modern mind that Pauline truth when translated out of its theological nomenclature has a deathless message for men of all times. It has seemed, therefore, to the present writer that a separate view of the ethical as distinguished from the doctrinal teaching of the apostle may be of some service. It will scarcely be denied that Paul dwells frequently upon the details of human conduct, but the point to be noted is that such details are not excrescences but of a piece with all his thinking, his ethical precepts are not simply tacked on as an appendix, but flow directly, as a natural sequence, from his dogmatic principles.

The special aim of this volume consequently is not only to present in a systematic whole the various virtues and duties which the apostle inculcates, but also to show (and this is indeed the central thought of the book) that morality is absolutely vital to St. Paul's religion, and that he ever seeks to bring the dynamic of the Gospel to bear upon practical life.

No man is independent of his environment, and with all his originality Paul was affected by the conditions of life and thought amid which he was reared. The writer has therefore endeavoured to indicate the apostle's relations to the ethical conceptions of his day, contrasting and comparing at various points his teaching with the philosophical systems of the ancient world.

The particular topics dealt with fall into three main divisions:

1. *Sources and Postulates*, treating not only of the influences which shaped the early life and thought of Paul, but also of the presuppositions with regard to man's moral nature which he brought over into the new life from his pre-Christian days.

2. *Ideals and Principles*, dealing with the new Ideal of life, the peculiarity of which, as Paul conceived it, is shown to be that it is at once Norm and Power, Vision and Energy; and the chief forms or virtues in which the ideal is to be realized.

3. *Duties and Spheres*, indicating the particular obligations prescribed by the Christian ideal and the different spheres amid which the Christian is called upon to exercise the ethical life.

The attempt has been made to base the exposition upon a careful study of the actual words of the apostle, and the value of a work of this kind must largely depend not only upon the appositeness of the quotations, but also upon their cumulative force. While the author would fain believe that no important passage bearing upon the moral life has been overlooked, he has sought to avoid giving to his treatment of the subject the character of a mere mosaic of texts.

The detailed synopsis of contents as well as the abundant references to other works, it is hoped, may prove useful to those who desire to pursue the subject. A large number of books upon philosophical and Christian ethics has been consulted, but the author has endeavoured as far as possible to acknowledge his indebtedness.

To the Rev. Charles Allan, M.A., Finnart Church, Greenock, who with ungrudging kindness carefully read each chapter in MS. and afterwards in proof, and placed at his disposal many valuable suggestions, the present writer tenders his most grateful thanks.

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Justitia et Caritas unicum et certissimum verae fidei
Catholicae signum est, et veri Spiritus Sancti fructus;
et ubicunque haec reperiuntur, ibi Christus re vera est,
et ubicunque haec desunt deest Christus: Solo namque
Christi Spiritu duci possumus in amorem justitiae et
Caritatis.

SPINOZA, *Ethica*.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY. ST. PAUL AS AN ETHICAL TEACHER

It was perhaps inevitable that the great historical manifestation which we call Christianity, should at the outset arouse a speculative interest and receive the mould of a metaphysic rather than an ethic. It might have been, as has been suggested, of infinite advantage if the early church councils had concerned themselves as much with the ethics as with the metaphysics of the person of Christ.¹ But probably on account both of the nature of the new faith, and of the environment amid which it grew, it was not surprising that it should assume the character of a system of doctrine.

When we consider the profound intellectual problems—as to the Being of God, as to the Deity of the Son and the relation of the two natures in Christ, as to the origin and extent of sin and the character of the reconciliation between man and God effected by the death of Christ—which at once presented themselves, we see how natural it was that Christianity should be first approached on its speculative rather than its practical side.

Moreover, the new religion, though it sprang from Jewish soil, had its first habitat in the intellectual

¹ Fairbairn, *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 565.

atmosphere of the Greco-Roman world. It may be that Christianity was saved by being thus assimilated to the world in which it had come to live. But the assimilation cost it centuries of impotence and struggle, more or less fruitless, to escape from the toils in which it had been caught.¹ In this home of its adoption the spirit of Greek genius held sway, the characteristic of which was to appropriate new truth as it presented itself and shape it in the mould of its own native speculation.

One consequence of the scientific treatment of Christianity, which marks the early ages of ecclesiastical history, was the almost entire neglect of the ethical nature and practical significance of the new religion. For more than fifteen centuries the history of the Church presents the dreary spectacle of bitter controversy and futile strife, and Christianity takes the form of a compound of dogmatic assumption and arid definition.

Fortunately, however, life has often proved stronger than theory, and more than once in the course of the ages the subtleties of theology have been flung aside and religion has come forth as an ethical power. The spirit of the Renaissance and the ideals of Romanticism, with their return to human interests, prepared the way for the Reformation, which was really a moral revival as much, if not more, than a doctrinal movement. But the ethical character which Luther gave to the Reformation was once more thrust into the background by the attempt of Calvin and his followers on the one side and the Arminians on the other to systematise the faith. The Gospels were neglected and the Bible was resorted to as a quarry from which to extract the stones suitable for the erection of a gigantic theological edifice.

¹ Fairbairn, *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 564.

Under the influence of the historical spirit, which is perhaps the most marked feature of the thought of our time, signs are not wanting of the revival of interest in the ethical side of Christianity. The distinguishing characteristic of modern theology is, without question, its new feeling for Christ. From the palimpsest of the Church's changeful history over-written by the glosses, the inevitable conflicts and controversies, the misconceptions and partial conceptions of nigh two thousand years, the life and teaching of Jesus are being gradually restored. We are no longer content to regard Christianity as an abstract system of doctrine, and to construe its meaning through the decisions of Church councils. We go back to the Gospels to interpret Christ by means of His own character and thought. Under the pressure of vital needs and the calls and claims of the new time, the obscuring media of doctrinal abstraction and mediaeval speculation are being slowly but surely destroyed, that in Him who is its Light the world may once more see light clearly and be guided on its way. Viewed from the side of its expression in literature the new movement may be said to date from Strauss' *Leben Jesu*; but perhaps the book which has most decisively directed attention to the ethical elements in Christianity is the ethics of Schleiermacher. Since his time a host of brilliant writers—of whom Keim, Hausrath, Bernard Weiss, Wendt, Harnack, and Hermann are conspicuous—have sought to reveal to the world the supreme value of the personal character and ethical teaching of Jesus.

The reasonableness of this movement at once becomes evident if we examine with unprejudiced minds the original documents of our faith. If we turn to the first three Gospels we discover that the atmosphere is

entirely ethical. "One enters a region of homes and fields, of natural and familiar experiences, and through this rolling country with its varied vocations, its joys and pains, its happiness and temptations; among old and young, rich and poor, good and bad, walks the Teacher of the higher righteousness, showing by words of blessing and deeds of mercy, the way that men should go."¹ The Synoptic Gospels are not the exposition of a doctrine, but the narrative of a life. Whatever further disclosures as to the relation of man to God, or as to the nature of Christ Himself, these Gospels may suggest, are inferences rather than direct purposes of the narratives themselves. The deity of the Son of Man, the sacrificial and atoning power of His death, His Resurrection and His eternal Presence, are truths which may be legitimately deduced from His life and teaching; but the inculcation of these doctrines is not the immediate aim of the Synoptics. Jesus is concerned with life and is in the first instance a teacher of righteousness and purity. He does not address Himself to the learned, but the simple. He does not begin with a theology, but with the questions of personal and practical life as they present themselves to fishermen and publicans, to the doubting and the sinning. His first blessings are offered to the poor, the humble, the merciful, the peacemakers. His first rebukes are for hypocrisy, worldliness, anxiety. He lays the emphasis upon chastity, moderation, sincerity, brotherliness, love. The kingdom of God is not a theological tenet but an ethical ideal. The kingdom is the end of His desire, but the immediate aim is the making of citizens. For Jesus has what has been called a passion for humanity and His supreme care is the individual. To fit men for the kingdom is

¹ Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*, p. 20.

everywhere the motive of His work, and always His test of discipleship is ethical. "By their fruits ye shall know them." His own life was presented as the ideal of man, and the path to the ultimate goal lay through personal loyalty and obedience.

This strong ethical feeling is not confined to the Synoptics. Other portions of the New Testament exhibit the same feature. A very slight examination of the Epistles of St. Peter, of St. James, and of the writings of St. John, reveals the fact that they are largely occupied with the practical side of Christianity.

But when we approach the writings of St. Paul we perceive at once a distinct change of atmosphere, and we are apparently introduced into a region of speculative theology. The difference of atmosphere must be freely conceded, although its significance has been greatly overstated. A marked contrast is perceptible, so we are told, between the teaching of Jesus and that of Paul. There is little in the apostolic epistles of the ethical quality of the Sermon on the Mount. New ideas and new terms are introduced in the epistles of which no hint is given in the gospels. Jesus, the ethical teacher, is at a great remove from Paul the theologian. The one lays stress on character, the other on doctrine. The Master is concerned with the conditions of life and conduct, the disciple is occupied with the elaboration of dogma.

This view, especially advocated in recent years, has of course its measure of truth. But in the form in which it is too often expressed it does serious injustice to an important and too much neglected aspect of the work and teaching of the great apostle.

That Paul was pre-eminently a theologian will not be denied. His was the profound intellect which developed and shaped the great cardinal doctrine of Christianity.

He is the Church's prime authority on the doctrine of Sin, the Sacrifice of Christ, and Justification by Faith. His epistles are undoubtedly the mine whence the great dogmatic thinkers have derived their materials for the elaboration of their theology. The mind of Paul was of vast mental range and subtlety. He was just the instrument which the new faith needed to consolidate and unify its various elements in view of the intellectual conflict which it was called upon to wage not only with the philosophy of the Gentile world, but also with the reactionary element in the traditions of the Jewish people. Paul was the man for the hour. The immediate and clamant necessity was a thinker of broad massive make to sketch the first outline of Christian truth, to gather up all that the Lord had already uttered through His life and teaching, and to interpret, in view of the breadth and variety of human needs, the value and import of the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

But it would be a mistake to conclude that because the apostle was pre-eminent in the domain of dogma he was distinguished in no other fields. As a matter of fact the true theologian is always something more. The genuine thinker is a maker of life, and the doctrine which has no relation to character is sterile and dead. Paul combined in a manner rarely paralleled in history speculative acumen with practical talent. Though an unwearied writer with a decided literary instinct and a distinct liking for the elaboration of speculative ideas, there was in Paul nothing of the recluse. He was at the very storm-centre of the great world's surging life. In him all its dumb need and pain and sorrow found voice,

"Desperate tides of the whole great world's anguish
Forced thro' the channels of a single heart."¹

¹ Myers, *Saint Paul*.

He was practical alike by nature, by the necessities of the situation, and by the inward propulsion of a Christ-like pity. He proved himself an indefatigable organiser and an untiring traveller. Every gift of intellect and imagination as well as all his stores of knowledge and experience were subordinated and consecrated to one great end—the unveiling to the world for which He died of the unsearchable riches of the crucified and risen Lord.

The intensely practical character of the Pauline epistles is apt to be lost sight of on account of their frequently polemical character. From the very nature of the case they are largely apologetic. One main object is to justify and commend a new view of the world and of life. The difficulties in conception and nomenclature which naturally arose in introducing a new and revolutionary faith involved at once a conflict with philosophical ideas already in vogue, and the elucidation of principles which lay at the basis of the religion and life he sought to inculcate. But in spite of the necessarily speculative attitude of a great part of the Pauline teaching, we cannot for a moment mistake its distinctively ethical character. The whole religious superstructure rests upon moral assumptions. Its last appeal is to the universality of human experience. Its great and distinctive ideas—Sin, Righteousness, Law, Works—are not mere abstract dogmas, but really ethical conceptions which obtain their whole significance from their bearing on life and conduct. His writings cannot be regarded as systematic treatises. They are strictly letters, the form and contents of which arose out of the special conditions and requirements of the communities or the individuals to whom they were addressed. They have all the glow and warmth of personal experience, and while they contain

truths of universal interest, they are coloured and shaped by the circumstances which called them forth. Paul scarcely ever deals with merely abstract thoughts or discusses problems of purely theoretic or academic interest. Every question has a personal background, and though he is prone to lift the discussion up to the general and deal with principles rather than details, his thought has usually some particular case or concrete example for its starting-point, nor does he close his epistle without focussing the truth in a series of precepts concerning practical morality. No one, indeed, can read these epistles without feeling that their author was more interested in men than in thoughts, and more concerned about character than creed. Life is everywhere his theme, and he is more anxious to reconcile men to God than to construct a theodicy. A supreme ethical interest dominates the man and his life-work, and even the epistles which are distinctively doctrinal are chiefly concerned with principles upon which character ultimately depends. The prime object of the Epistle to the Romans is to explain the nature of righteousness, and if the apostle takes pains to establish the doctrine of Justification by Faith, it is to make men feel that it is not only worth their while but within their power to attain to righteousness. "It would be truer," says Edward Caird, "to say that the ethical principle of St. Paul begot the theological than that the theological begot the ethical."¹

Nor in this respect is it just to contrast the teaching of Christ with that of St. Paul. Both have an ethical purpose. Both lay the emphasis on character. The great words of Christ are also the great words of Paul. The latest attempt to overthrow the view predominant

¹ *Evolution of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 202.

in modern theology that Paul loyally and consistently espoused and developed the teaching of Jesus is that of Wrede,¹ whose startling statements have already called forth an army of hostile critics.² "Paul," says Wrede, "is far more widely removed from Jesus than Jesus Himself is removed from the noblest form of Jewish piety." "The picture of Jesus' life and work did not determine the character of the Pauline theology." It is nothing to Wrede that Paul regarded himself as a disciple of Jesus, and so far from believing himself to be an innovator, repeatedly claims to have the mind of Christ. "The teaching of Jesus," says Wrede, "is directed entirely to the individual personality. Man is to submit his soul to God's will without reserve. Hence the preaching of Jesus is imperative." "The central point with Paul is a divine and superhuman action manifested in a historical fact, or in a complex of divine actions which open to mankind a salvation prepared for man. He who believes these divine acts—the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of a divine being—can obtain salvation." In other words, Wrede affirms that the standpoints of the Master and the apostle are opposed, and the condition of salvation is in each case entirely different. With Jesus the condition was merely human, with Paul it was divine. According to Christ it was simply a matter of personal decision; according to Paul it was a superhuman act done for man, and to be accepted by faith. The supernatural element which was everything to Paul meant nothing for Jesus. We are very far from admitting that the assumptions of Wrede, so airily

¹ *Paulus*.

² Kölbinger, *The Spiritual Influence of the Man Jesus upon Paul*; Kaftan, *Jesus and Paul*; Jülicher, *Paul and Jesus*; and Joh. Weiss, *Paul and Jesus*.

and lightly made, can be substantiated. But we are only concerned here with the unanimity of Paul and Christ in their ethical teaching; and there is one consideration going to the very root of the matter, which, if duly weighed, will be sufficient, as we think, to refute Wrede's contention, and to show that, fundamentally, the Master and His apostle were at one in the requirements and conditions which they taught as essential to the new life.

The inmost spring, the very *fons et origo* of vital religion in the new life of love and helpfulness is, we maintain, the same for both. It will not surely be denied by any student of the epistles, that the great object of the Pauline dialectic is to place man, emptied of trust in self, bankrupt in righteousness, in a condition of receptiveness before God. This, for Paul, is where religion begins—with the weakness which takes hold of the divine strength, with the want which brings its empty vessel to the fulness of God. And this, in Paul's reading of history, is the deepest meaning of the religious experience of his own race. This, indeed, he declares to be the very purpose of the law, to reveal and condemn sin and shut a man up to the consciousness of his own utter impotence. The Jew seeking a righteousness "of his own" failed utterly, even as did the Greek seeking a wisdom "of his own"; the reason being that righteousness and wisdom alike have their source in God, and come to man only as he forgets self and becomes the willing instrument and receiver of the power and grace and wisdom that are from above. But this idea, fundamental in Paul, is fundamental also in the teaching of Jesus. It is, indeed, the beginning of everything. It is the very first of the laws of the kingdom. With it the Sermon on the Mount (between which and Paul it is so often asserted

there is no vital point of contact)¹ begins. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." Analyse that great saying of Jesus and what does it yield you? Surely the whole principle of the Pauline dialectic and the living heart of the whole of the Pauline religion.²

In perfect agreement with all this is the fundamental importance assigned both by Jesus and by Paul to faith, faith in God, the fountain of all good, faith in the Fatherhood of God and in the sonship and calling of man. With both faith is something more than mere mental assent, or even implicit confidence in the provision and care of a Heavenly Father. It is the inspiration and dynamic of life, the ruling principle in shaping conduct. It is the spiritual vision in man of the ideal by which, in virtue of his vital relation to the living source of all power and renewal, he already is what he aspires to be and has what he longs for. The distinctive note of Christ's ethics is the inwardness of the moral law as distinguished from the externality of the ceremonial law. He commends righteousness as the aim of man, but it is not the righteousness of outward observance, but of inward spirit. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of Heaven." Almost in identical terms Paul insists upon the need of inward purity, the purity of the hidden man of the heart. Christ lays emphasis upon the fulfilment of our duties

¹ Even Weiss asserts that Paul's "Ethical system based on supernaturalism can never be harmonised with the commands given in the Sermon on the Mount." *Paul and Jesus*, p. 112.

² The writer has pleasure in stating that the substance of this paragraph has been suggested to him by his friend, Rev. Charles Allan of Greenock.

to our fellow-men. Paul also enforces the obligation of mutual service, expressly declaring that it is in the bearing of one another's burdens that the followers of Christ fulfil His "law."¹ Further, the ethics of Christ and of His apostle are one in declaring that man owes to his fellow-man an even greater debt than duty. Christ's principle is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"; and in the spirit of his Master, the apostle's injunction is, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." According to both, love is more than law, and he who only does his duty has not attained to the true spirit of Christian service. Christ transforms morality from a routine into a life; and with Paul goodness ceases to be a thing of outward rule, and becomes a spontaneous energy of the soul. For both all virtues are but various expressions of a single vital principle. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." The dynamic of devotion is, according to Christ, God's love towards us. Nor is it different according to Paul: "The love of Christ constraineth us."

If we turn from the motive of service to the aim and purpose of life, again we find the Master and the disciple in substantial agreement. "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect" is the standard of Christ; to attain to the perfect life,—“the prize of the high calling of God in Christ”—is the aim of Paul. Nor do they differ in their conception of the ultimate goal of the world. It has been affirmed by Joh. Weiss that "we do not know whether Jesus turned his gaze upon the inhabited world as a whole."² "His heart is preoccupied with the people immediately about Him. He confines Himself to the 'little flock,' to the 'few' who are 'chosen,' and it is His task to save from impending judgment the souls of

¹ Gal. vi. 2.

² *Paul and Jesus*, p. 65 ff.

the people of the towns and villages of Galilee." "To Paul, on the other hand, the most important point is that the Word 'should not be bound,' but that it should run (2 Thess. iii.; 2 Tim. ii. 9). He describes his work by the metaphors of a triumphant campaign of God through the land (2 Cor. ii. 14), and the reconciliation of 'the world' is his object. Paul, with his Greek culture and Roman citizenship, cannot rest content with gathering believers upon a small spot of earth—so soon as he has decided for Christ, plans for wide-world missionary enterprise come before his mind." But in our view, so far from seeing in this perfectly true description of Paul's aim an antithesis to that of Christ's, we regard it rather as the natural and logical outcome of his Master's teaching. Jesus' immediate care was for those about Him, and He began with the people of His own land; but we miss surely the whole significance of His Gospel and the meaning of His message if we do not see that it was an evangel for all men, tidings of hope for man as man. Not only does He declare that the "field is the world" (Matt. xiii. 38), but He proclaims a kingdom into which the heathen shall flock and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob (Matt. viii. 4). Surely no one can doubt that Christ's ethical ideal, which he looked for as the realisation of the object of His mission, was a redeemed humanity, a complete renewal and re-establishment of human society—which he designated "the kingdom of God." Paul, with his splendid conception of humanity, sees that kingdom typified and realised in the risen life of his Lord, but he is not therefore to be regarded as offering a different idea of the ultimate aim of Christianity. For the advent of the Christ-like man will be itself the realization of the social ideal, the coming of God's kingdom on the earth. It is by growing up in

all things unto Him who is the head that the whole body will be perfected in the perfection of its members. And this is what Paul means when he sums up in these splendid words to the Ephesians, the goal and ideal of all human faith and endeavour—"till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

It is evident then that there is no radical difference between the ethical teaching of Jesus and that of Paul. On the contrary, there is everywhere identity of spirit and aim, and in not a few instances a striking similarity of language. In passages dealing with questions essentially ethical,¹ while there is no attempt at literal quotation, we find reminiscences of the words of Jesus. In emphasizing an ethical command Paul knows himself to be acting entirely in the spirit of Jesus. "We have the mind of Christ," he declares to the Corinthians, by which he means not merely that we think as Christ, but that "Christ thinks in us." "The mental processes of the Christian are under the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of Christ."² He it is that enables His followers to develop, apply and interpret, the will of God. Hence, too, when in 1 Cor. iv. 17 he speaks of "my ways which be in Christ"—(*τὰς ὁδούς μου ἐν Χριστῷ*), and in Romans xvi. 14, "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus"—(*οἶδα καὶ πέπεισμαι ἐν Κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ*), he is implying that the "way" and the "conviction" are his in virtue of his inward communion with Christ. But it is no mystical or mechanical obsession of Christ's spirit which Paul claims as compelling him to utter Christ's mind and follow His method. The idea is that in such matters the personality

¹ *E.g.* Rom. xii. 13, 1 Cor. xiii., or Col. iii.

² J. Weiss, *Paul and Jesus*, p. 115.

and teaching of Jesus as known to him are before his mind and are directing his course. He acknowledges himself to be a disciple or pupil of his Master and a teacher of His ways. Whatever other elements, therefore, there may be in Paul's teaching, and however the theological interpretations and implications of the epistles may seem to go beyond the direct and personal narrative of the Synoptics, there is no doubt that both in their hidden spiritual depths and in their practical life the precepts of the apostle are in essential agreement with those of the Sermon on the Mount, and have a common purpose—the presenting of every man perfect before God.

That the writings of Paul, long regarded as chiefly theological and metaphysical in their character, should turn out on examination to be essentially and fundamentally ethical will the less surprise us if we regard not only the nature of the Christian religion as revealed in the person and work and teaching of its Founder, but also the peculiar vocation of the apostle and the psychological atmosphere in which he was called to discharge it. Paul was a missionary, the first and incomparably the greatest in all the long heroic succession, and it is not surprising in the case of a missionary that the real stress of his effort should be laid in the sphere of practical life, and should be applied to the formation of moral character. Further, the peculiar nature of Paul's work answered to a deep need of the age. The message of Christianity was a welcome response to the sigh of dissatisfaction and despair arising from the hearts of men which the worn-out creeds and philosophies of the times could not meet. But the claims of Christ went directly in the face of the accepted morals of the age. And on that very account the continued existence and success of the new Faith made the treatment of and emphasis upon

the moral life indispensable. Either the practices of heathenism must crush the religion of Christ, or Christianity must combat the prevailing modes of conduct with a higher and nobler view of life. Thus, for the apostle Paul, the moral life constituted the inevitable corollary and indispensable consequence of the new religious conditions into which he sought to introduce his fellow-men by the declaration of the glad message of life in Christ. What for us to-day, at least, is in theory but a commonplace—that religion must express itself in life, and that morality is the test and measure of belief, was practically a novel idea in the Greco-Roman world of Paul's time. It was the apostle's deliberately chosen task to show that religion must not isolate itself from life, but become its mainspring and formative factor, working itself out through every department of personal and social activity, consecrating every faculty of man as well as every detail of daily conduct. It was his constant effort, an effort to which every epistle bears witness, by a variety of precept and a wealth of illustration drawn from the institutions and activities of his times, to enforce the truth that faith does not consist in intellectual opinion or outward ceremony, but in the actual service and living devotion of the whole man to God. In thus contending for the ethical embodiment of Christianity he was faithful not only to the character of the Old Testament religion in which he was reared, and more especially to the teaching of Jesus to which he owed the inspiration of his life and mission, but also to the circumstances of the historical situation and the peculiar needs of those to whom he sought to minister.

Convinced as we are of the soundness of the views just expressed regarding the real character of the apostle's work, and in view of the patent fact that a

very large part of the Pauline writings is devoted to the ethical side of life, and that it was his undoubted aim not merely to establish the faith and expound the kingdom of God, but quite as much to shape the character of his newly-created converts and guide their conduct in regard to the practical questions arising out of their new standing as Christians, no apology is needed for dealing, as we propose to do, with the ethics of St. Paul. Notwithstanding the great and ever-increasing mass of Pauline exegesis, this field has received less attention than other departments of Paul's work. And it has seemed to us that a separate view of the ethical as distinguished from the doctrinal teaching of the apostle will be of some service to the Church and to students of the New Testament. Also, in an age in which the study of ethics, both philosophical and Christian, is coming to the front, it is surely desirable that the utterances of the first and greatest exponent of the Christian life with regard to its ideals, virtues and duties, should be systematized and co-related.

We have not deemed it necessary to enter upon any elaborate discussion of the nature of ethics, or to examine the various imports and meanings which the term has received from the time of the Greeks to our own times. On that aspect of the subject the following brief remarks may suffice.

It was Aristotle who first gave to this science its name and systematic form. Ethics, according to its Greek signification, is the science of customs or morals. It enquires into the worth of human modes of behaviour, and its object is to guide man in the proper conduct of life. It was in this sense the term was used by Aristotle, and the function of ethics was, according to him, to show how human life must be fashioned to realize

its end and purpose. "What," asked Aristotle, "is the highest good of life, in what virtues does it consist, and what are the duties which must be performed in order to realize that ultimate end?" Philosophical ethics, therefore, might be defined as the science of the laws of human action. All practical sciences, of which ethics is one, are based upon a distinct theory of life. If we ask then, what is Christian ethics, we assume the Christian view of life; and the definition must be in harmony with faith in the revelation of God in Christ. The question of Christian ethics, therefore, comes to be, how ought we, as Christians, to regulate our lives? What are the nature, meaning and laws of the moral life as dominated by faith in Christ? With the question, What must we believe? there inevitably arises this other question, What ought we to do? Ethics is based on dogmatics. The one is the complement of the other. It is important that we should know the meaning and content of Christian faith; but it is not less important that we should know how to order our Christian life. Doctrine shows us in what manner the kingdom of God becomes to us an assured possession as the gift of God's love; ethics shows how this assured faith of salvation manifests itself in love to God and our neighbours, and must be worked out in all the relationships of life.¹ These are the questions which bulk largely in the epistles of Paul. Our subject, therefore, is the exposition of the apostle's view of man's practical life and conduct as conditioned and inspired by his faith in Christ.

It is no part of our task to enter upon a critical examination of the authenticity of the Pauline epistles. In the case of at least four this has scarcely ever been

¹ See Haering, *Ethics of the Christian Life*, p. 4.

seriously questioned. The position of the earlier critics of the Tübingen school, who denied the authenticity of all the epistles except Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans, is now largely discredited, and the tendency is to accept an increasing number of the thirteen which bear Paul's name. Uncertainty is still entertained in many quarters with regard to the Pauline authorship of Colossians and Ephesians; while the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles is frequently regarded as doubtful. Recent writers like Wernle and Weinel would deny them a place among the writings of the apostle; but it is interesting to note that no less an authority than Theodor Zahn in the latest edition of his *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, a work which has just appeared in English translation, contends vigorously for the Pauline authorship of all the thirteen epistles—the Pastoral among the rest. Without discussing critical matters we may assume for our purpose the genuineness of these epistles, and that they represent, even those of them which may be of doubtful authenticity, at least the mind and teaching of the apostle. In addition to the epistles we have in the Book of Acts a record of Paul's life and work and a number of reports of his discourses. The long cherished opinion that the author of this work was Luke, the physician, a close companion of the apostle during a portion of his missionary labours, has found recently in Prof. Harnack in Germany and in Sir Wm. Ramsay in our own country a brilliant and powerful advocacy.

The Pauline Epistles may be arranged chronologically in four groups, each of which has a well-marked individuality: (1) Paul's earlier or missionary epistles, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, written at Corinth about the year 52 A.D. These contain doctrinal and practical

teaching of an elementary kind, and may be said to inculcate the first principles of Christianity and the practical inferences which are involved in them. (2) The great controversial epistles—Galatians, written during Paul's three years' residence at Ephesus, probably about A.D. 55; 1 and 2 Corinthians, written at Ephesus and in Macedonia respectively, A.D. 58; and Romans, written at Corinth during the winter of 58-59. The controversial or doctrinal epistles, as they are sometimes called, expound Christianity as a religion of grace in contrast to legalism. (3) The epistles of the captivity—Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians and Philippians—which were probably composed while the apostle was a prisoner at Rome during the years 61-63. They set forth the dignity and heavenly relations of Christ, as well as the nature and privileges of those who are in vital fellowship with Him. (4) The pastoral epistles—1 and 2 Timothy and Titus—supposed to have been written after Paul had been released from his first imprisonment at Rome, the first epistle to Timothy and Titus being written during his period of freedom, and the second epistle to Timothy during his second imprisonment and shortly before his execution in 68 A.D. These epistles deal with Church order and pastoral duty.

The question might be asked, and indeed has often been debated, as to whether these groups disclose a development or gradual modification in the teaching of the apostle. Is Paul always consistent with himself? Do his writings form a unity? or do we find, as we might expect, that these writings—occasional in their character, written at different times, and addressed to different communities and with different objects—express views and exhibit elements which it is difficult to reconcile? It would be unnatural to expect that Paul's

literary labours would be exempted from the conditions and limitations which affect most human compositions. He himself does not disclaim the possibility of development, and he associates himself with those who know in part and wait for fuller light (1 Cor. xiii. 12). He regards progress in knowledge as a subject of prayer and a duty of the Christian (1 Cor. i. 5; Phil. i. 9). "It is plain that his own life was marked by an intellectual strenuousness which led him to sustained reflection on the divine basis and on the manifold significance and bearings of the verities of the faith." It cannot be denied that the earlier epistles to the Thessalonians contain a more simple and elementary exposition of truth than that which we meet with in the controversial epistles, while in the epistles of the captivity deeper and larger conceptions of Christ's significance for the world and humanity are unfolded. At the same time it would be hazardous to affirm that any marked development in the teaching of the apostle, or any real discrepancy between the earlier and later compositions exists. The critical readers might possibly fasten on what at first sight seems serious inconsistency between the apostle's views regarding marriage contained in 1 Cor. vii. and those which he presents in Ephesians v. 22-33. In the former passage he appears to incline to the ascetic view, merely permitting marriage as a prevention of evil; while in the latter he glorifies it as a type of the relation of Christ to the Church.¹ Again, the epistle to Philemon might be cited as an instance of ethical progress. The new conception of the relation of man to God in Christ, which is assumed in the earlier epistles, passes here into an ethical application of the relations in which master and slave stand to each other. The condition of slavery

¹ But see chapter on "The Family."

which was taken for granted in writing to the Corinthians, and assumed to be a necessary and natural institution of society not to be questioned or absolved (1 Cor. vii. 24) becomes by the implications of his later teaching morally impossible and indefensible. He shows Philemon that a full realization of Christian discipleship involves the abolition of slavery, and if Philemon is loyal to the Gospel which he acknowledges, then he will no longer regard Onesymus as a bondsman, but receive him as a brother (Philemon 16). Finally, Paul in his earlier epistles writes under the strong conviction that the end of the world is at hand and that he himself and his contemporaries will not see death, whereas in his later writings there is an indication that that persuasion was somewhat modified if not departed from. In any case it does not hold the prominent place in his latest letters which it does in the earlier.

On the whole, however, it may be said that the epistles of Paul are wonderfully free from inconsistencies, and that the differences are differences of emphasis rather than of contradiction. Greater stress is laid in one place than another upon certain virtues and certain vices, and sometimes a different perspective is given, or a different motive is adduced from the same mode of action. Sometimes with one set of hearers or readers one line of argument is followed, while another is adopted with a different class. Sometimes the emphasis is put upon one doctrine, sometimes upon another. Faith is the chief virtue extolled at one time, at another it is love, at a third it is hope. Now he commands patient waiting, now strenuous endeavour. The circumstances which called forth the epistles of the captivity led the apostle to give special prominence to certain truths which in writing the controversial epistles he felt no call to

explain. Doubtless Paul, in common with all Christians, was conscious of a growing enrichment in spiritual knowledge: and in his later epistles he shows that he has reached calmer heights and breathes a purer air. He beholds larger prospects of redemption than when he first began to preach to the Gentiles. He knows the spirit of Christ more profoundly, and as his experience deepens and his relationship with all kinds and classes of men widens he seems to attain to a fuller grasp of the world-wide significance of the Gospel.¹

But taken as a whole the moral teaching which is presented in the epistles of Paul is one. It constitutes a single normative authority of life and practice, and may be made, as we now propose to make it, the subject of careful and consecutive study. By Pauline ethics we mean Paul's interpretation of the ethics of Christ: and what we have to consider is the apostle's statement and enforcement of the moral and practical side of Christianity — of the ideals, virtues, and duties which flow directly from a living faith in Christ.

¹ Newman Smyth, *Christian Ethics*, v. 63.

PART I
SOURCES AND POSTULATES

CHAPTER II

THE SHAPING INFLUENCES OF PAUL'S TEACHING

BEFORE entering upon a detailed study of the ethical ideal, or highest good, which Paul conceived as the end of the Christian life, and of the manner in which he applied it to the various spheres of duty, it will be necessary to enquire what were the forces which shaped and directed the ethical outlook of the apostle, the educative influences which made him the man he was and fitted him to become the great apostle of the Gentiles? What preparation, conscious and unconscious, did he undergo for his life-work, and what ideas with regard to God and man did he bring into it from the intellectual and moral world in which he was reared? The teaching of Paul did not, like Athene from the head of Zeus, spring full-grown and perfectly equipped, from the mind of its author. It was a growth which developed by contact and antagonism with the thought of the age. It had its historical setting and environment which acted upon it and drew it forth. Some analysis, therefore, of the elements of which it is composed is the necessary preliminary to the understanding of the teaching itself. For nothing could be truer than to say with Pfleiderer that Paul's "whole past history and education acted upon and co-operated with the truth which took

possession of his mind at his conversion, and so modified it, as to give it a tone and colour peculiar to himself.”¹

Had Paul been reared amid other intellectual and social surroundings, the whole form and complexion of his teaching would have been different. His knowledge of the Old Testament, his Rabbinical training, his contact with Greek life and thought, combined with his own personal moral strivings, his individualistic temperament and intensity of nature, constituted the material to which the revelation of Christ supplied the magnetic centre. And round this centre the whole complex and diversified personality of the apostle crystallized.

In the making of every man, separable in thought although acting as one, three formative influences are at work; ancestry, environment, and personality. A man is partly what his fathers have been! partly what the thought and life of his own day calls forth; but along with these two factors of heredity and environment, and—in the cases of those who have made a deep impress on history—more powerful than either, must be noted a third—the plastic personal element. It must be acknowledged that the great apostle of the Gentiles was what he was and did what he did, chiefly because of the mass and quality of those personal endowments which enabled him to mould the material given in heredity and supplied by circumstance to the one overmastering passion and all-embracing purpose of his strenuous and beneficent life. Still all three forces contribute to the making of Paul, all are important, and it is, we think possible, within limits, to discover the influence of each both in his life and in his teaching.

It is the aim of this chapter to discuss under the

¹ *Paulinismus*, p. 4.

headings—Hebrew, Hellenistic, and Christian,—these three factors in the first making of the apostle. The Hebrew was obviously the chief hereditary endowment; the Hellenistic, the main contemporary influence. And surely the Christian element, since it was the power which discovered the apostle to himself, revealed the true Paul, the man within the man, and linked the human faculty to the infinite and eternal energies of the unseen, may not inappropriately represent the depths and powers of personality in the case of one whose explanation of every achievement in thought and life was the same: "Yet not I but Christ that dwelleth in me."

I.

First, then, we have to consider the *ancestral* element, the influence on the ethic of Paul of his Jewish descent and upbringing. The Jew in Paul was fundamental. He was Hebrew by nationality and education, Israelite by birth and creed. Born in Tarsus of Cilicia, he had a certain pride in the place of his nativity; yet it was not for the Cilician town, no mean city though it was, but for the land of his fathers, that his heart glowed. A citizen of Tarsus, he nevertheless felt as did so many of the Jews of the Dispersion, that he was an alien in a strange land. His father was probably one of those numerous Jews who had wandered from the Holy Land in pursuit of trade and had settled in one of the many centres of commerce on the Mediterranean Sea. The Jews did not readily coalesce with those among whom they dwelt, but remained in dress, food and faith a peculiar people. Sometimes, however, and this seems to have been the case in Tarsus, the Hebrew colony, or at least distinguished members of it, became

permanent inhabitants of the city of their adoption and received the full rights of burgesses. There was indeed much in a heathen town like Tarsus to weaken in the case of a Hebrew the influence of his ancestral faith; and as a matter of fact the Jewish residents in foreign cities were less strict in their religious views and more tolerant of surrounding customs than their brethren in Palestine. Tarsus, however, was situated at no great distance from Jerusalem, and being practically a seaport and a great commercial centre offered frequent opportunities of intercourse. The family celebration of the Passover, the constant household instruction, the regular meeting of Synagogue—all tended to keep alive the national feeling and to induce the more devout to revisit frequently the ancestral centre of religious life and worship. To this class the father of the apostle evidently belonged, for Paul calls himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and he was brought up, as he tells us, in the strictest sect of his people. The current Hebrew or Aramaic dialect of Palestine was probably spoken in the boy's home, from which at an impressionable age, probably about twelve years, he was sent to Jerusalem, to become the pupil of Gamaliel, a celebrated leader of the Pharisees, and to be trained in the calling of Rabbi or teacher of the law. Thus by the influences of home, through the instruction of Gamaliel, and by association with his own people both in Tarsus and Jerusalem, he was thoroughly imbued with the tenets of the Jewish faith and became an apt enthusiast for the traditions of his fathers.

It might be said of Paul, as he said of Timothy, that from a babe he had known the Holy Scriptures. His letters and spoken addresses show an intimate acquaintance with the sacred literature of his race. Not only

does he make numerous quotations from the Old Testament, but his whole mind is saturated with its spirit. It is the background of all his thinking, the presupposition of everything he taught. No other New Testament writer leads us so directly into the very heart of Judaism, or reveals to us so profoundly the secret of Israel's greatness. Isaiah is not more Jewish than Saul, the burgess of a Roman city, who became the Christian apostle. The same needs and the same hopes animate both. Only a Jew could have written the Pauline epistles, and even those which, like Romans and Corinthians, contain truths of universal application, bear in their entire matter and form the traces of their Hebrew origin. "It is not," says Sabatier, "the child of the city of Tarsus, but the Pharisee of Jerusalem which explains the apostle of the Gentiles."¹ And in his recent life of Paul the late Professor Wrede writes: "After all is said, the culture of Paul is the culture of the Rabbis. He caught it at its source . . . the fact that Paul went through the Rabbinical school stands fast in his letters, the traces of which are too clear to be denied."² If these expressions are too strong, not allowing sufficiently for the apostle's Hellenic culture, which, as we shall afterwards seek to show, was also an important factor of his thought, it will be readily admitted that from the Old Testament, in which he was trained, the apostle derived his earliest and most fundamental ideas, and that many of his ethical principles must be traced directly to his Jewish education.

The Jews were essentially a moral people, a people whose whole history is inspired and shaped by ethical ideals. At least some brief account of these is necessary if we are to understand the value and significance to Paul as an ethical teacher of his ancestral heritage.

¹ *L'Apôtre Paul*, p. 29.

² Wrede, *Paulus*, p. 7.

While the moral character of the Jewish dispensation is unmistakably marked, there is no ethical system strictly so called in the Bible.¹ Ethical ideas underlie the histories, prophecies, and legislation: they are not systematically deduced, but tacitly assumed as premises. Life for the Hebrew was shaped mainly by the prevalent conception of God and the peculiar relation in which His own people stood to Him. A simple ethic, as was natural among a primitive people, sufficed. In early Jewish literature, indeed, questions with which Greek speculation busied itself—as to the chief good, the nature of virtue or happiness—have no place. The God worshipped of the Hebrews was the supreme source and author of the moral law, and throughout all the development of their history, morality for the Jewish people was embodied in the Divine Will. Early in the Pentateuch the note of law is struck, and the fundamental elements of Jewish morality are imbedded in the story of Eden and of the Fall. The great antithesis of good and evil as two opposed powers underlies the whole ethical conception of life. God's command is the criterion and measure of man's obedience. Evil, which has its source and head in a hostile though subsidiary power, consists in violation of God's known will. The Mosaic legislation, centring in the Decalogue, and resting on the covenant-relation of the nation with Jehovah, consists mainly of precepts and prohibitions relative to man's attitude to the Deity and to his fellow-men. Though these laws promulgated by Moses may be shown to have their roots in the moral consciousness of mankind, they were naturally at first conceived by the Israelites to be restricted in their scope and practice to their own tribes, so that the average Hebrew did not feel any overmastering

¹ Hastings, *Bible Dictionary*, art. "Paul."

obligation to be truthful or honest in relation to others beyond the confines of his own kindred or race. The prevailing idea with regard to God, next to that of sovereign might, was separation or holiness, and the so-called "Priestly Code," consisting largely of a number of ceremonial enactments, which gradually took its place alongside of the Mosaic law, was established to guard the Being and worship of God from profanation. Not the priests, however, but the prophets are the great moralists of Israel, and in their writings the most conspicuous feature is the idea of the union of the nation with God, and the consequent condemnation of all idolatry and defection from proper allegiance to Him. They are the champions of righteousness and integrity in political life not less than of purity in the individual, and they comment upon the social vices to which a more developed people is liable. The prophets are not only the preachers but also the philosophers of the nation, and theories as to the origin and nature of evil begin to emerge. While on the one hand the sense of individual responsibility is emphasized, on the other the idea is also developed that there is a hereditary taint of evil, and that the consequences of sin may affect even the innocent. Evil, it is felt, enters too deeply into the constitution of things to be explained on the simple principle that each man is accountable for and endures only the penal consequences of his own sins. There are sufferings which are inherited, and penalties which a man incurs, not apparently through any fault of his own, but simply by reason of his place in the solidarity of the race. Problems like these awaken deep perplexity and doubt, which find a voice not only in the prophets but also in the Book of Job and in many of the Psalms. But a solution is sought in the thought that God works

through evil, and by its effects evolves man's highest good. These conceptions reach their climax in the Second Isaiah, and particularly in the fifty-third chapter. The inadequacy of mere ceremonial performance and the failure of all material means of intercourse with God are frequently dwelt upon as preparing the way for the doctrine of salvation. "God is continually represented as longing to pardon, anxious that men should return to their allegiance and realize the blessings of their covenant-union." The two ideas—separation from God by self-will and sin, on the human side, and forgiveness and reconciliation on the side of God—which gradually merge into and give shape to the conception of the Messianic hope—of the suffering servant and triumphant Lord—are the basal assumptions which underlie the ethical teaching of the prophets.¹ In the Book of Psalms—the devotional manual of the people reflecting the moral and religious life of the nation at various stages of its development—the same exalted character of God, as a God of righteousness and holiness, hating sin and jealous for the people's devotion, is prevalent. There, as in the Jewish writings generally, the divine character is represented as the moral ideal of life and the divine will as the rule of conduct.

Without dwelling upon the ethical ideas of the other writings of the Old Testament, as, for example, the books of wisdom, where moral practice is closely allied with the fear of God and the right choice of wisdom, we may sum up this rapid sketch of Jewish ethics by observing that the central feature of Old Testament morality is its religious character. It was simply the outcome and counterpart of the national faith and worship. The emphasis is everywhere laid upon the divine law, and

¹Hastings, *Bible Dictionary*, art. "Ethics."

the character of God is the rule and ideal of life. To be like God, to obey His will, to fulfil His commands, even to the remotest detail is the whole duty of man. "What," says Micah, "doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Sin is disobedience of God, and all particular vices, impurity, drunkenness, oppression of the poor, extortion and deceit, are wrong because God has prohibited them. Jehovah is the Jewish lawgiver who orders and presides over the Hebrew people with sovereign authority.

It must be remembered, however, that it was not only the Old Testament, but especially the Rabbinical interpretation of it which influenced Paul. He read the Bible through the exegetical glosses of the Pharisaic School.¹ Among the Pharisees there prevailed a strict theory of inspiration, according to which the Scriptures were not only regarded as the direct revelation of divine truth, but even in some real sense identical with God Himself. The immediate result of this was the adoption of an allegorizing method which became common among all Hebrew scholars, both of Palestine and Alexandria in the time of Paul. This Rabbinical use of Scripture may be frequently detected in the Pauline treatment of the Old Testament.² The most striking examples are to be found in 1 Cor. ix. 9, and in Gal. iv. 21 ff. But there is scarcely an outstanding character or important incident in Jewish history which does not furnish a type or allegory of Gospel truth. Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Hagar, Esau, Jacob; the Exodus, the Passover, the Crossing of the Red Sea, the Giving of

¹ See Pfeiderer, *Urchristenthum*, p. 178 ff.

² Cf. Immer, "Das Jüdische in der Lehre des Paulus," in his *Theologie des N. T.*, pp. 247-257; also cp. Pfeiderer, *Urchristenthum*.

the Manna—these and many other figures and facts are interwoven with Paul's teaching and are spiritualized to illustrate and enforce his appeals. But, perhaps, when we consider his training, the wonder is not at the extent of Rabbinic interpretation, but that he should be so free from its extravagancies and so sparing in its use.

Paul's education and native bent were strongly Palestinian, but it is not improbable that he was also influenced by the broader Alexandrian theology which had spread among the Greek Diaspora. An elaborate attempt has been made by some scholars to prove that Alexandrian thought had an important influence upon the apostle's teaching. Parallels have been traced between his ideas and those of Philo, and coincidences of thought are pointed out between his epistles and certain apocryphal books.¹ Many of these comparisons both in idea and expression are instructive, although the differences are also significant and may only suggest that both authors were independently subject to the same general influences. Pfeiderer is of opinion that Paul was not directly acquainted with Philo's writings, but that he was cognisant of an earlier work, the apocryphal *Book of Wisdom* to which Philo was also largely indebted.² Pfeiderer also points out some coincidences between the epistles of Paul and the *Book of Wisdom*³ which, however, other scholars, especially those of the English School, do not regard as sufficient to establish the derivation of the one series from the other.⁴

There are two main lines of thought affecting Paul's

¹ See Jowett's Essay in his *Commentary on Galatians*, also Siegfried, *Philo von Alexandria*, p. 303.

² *Das Urchristenthum*, p. 158.

³ P. 159 ff.

⁴ See Stevens, *Pauline Theology*, p. 57.

anthropological view of man and his ethical relation to God which may possibly be traced, on the one hand to the contemporary Hellenic literature of Alexandria, and on the other to the Rabbinical School of Palestine. These are the ideal forms of divine Wisdom and divine Law. Paul's teaching with regard to wisdom, its divine source and communication, man's capacity for receiving and appropriating it, his possession of a reasoning soul containing the potentiality of receiving truth, but not the actual ability either to discern or to fulfil the will of God till the Holy Spirit communicates it—these ideas, which we find in 1 Cor. ii. 6-16, offer a parallel to similar teaching in the *Book of Wisdom*. On the other hand, Paul's teaching with regard to the law, his high respect for it, his elaborate proof of man's inability to fulfil its requirements—may be considered as a reflection of Palestinian theology. If the Alexandrian thinkers exalted wisdom or the *Logos*, the Palestinian Rabbis exalted law or the *Thora*. But both came to pretty much the same. Both were the direct emanation and expression of the mind of God. What divine wisdom was to Philo, the *Thora* was to the Pharisees of Jerusalem—the *summum bonum*, the fountain of all blessing, "the light and bread of life." If the realization of wisdom was the aim of the Hellenists of Alexandria, devotion to the law was the essence of Rabbinical piety, a zeal which found its expression in its diligent study and the unabated desire to obey its behests. Whatever form the ideal assumed, whether expressed in terms of wisdom or of law—and both notions are present in the Pauline epistles—the practical question of Alexandrian thinkers and of Palestinian Rabbis was just the question which lay at the basis of Paul's own life and gave colour and direction to his entire ethical ideal: by what means can a man

overcome the weaknesses of the flesh and attain to the righteousness of God's holy law ?

Whatever then be the immediate channel of Jewish influence upon Paul, no one can read his epistles without perceiving that the Hebrew conception of God and of man is the implicate of all his teaching. For Paul the law stands supreme as the expression of the divine will, good and holy in itself; and his very proof of its impotence as a means of justification with God and the hopelessness of Israel's attempt through its observance to win the Messianic salvation, is an evidence of the importance he attached to it. His conception of the supreme authority of the one true God; his idea of omnipotence and over-ruling providence, of predestination and elective grace; his view of two opposed powers, a divine and a satanic, the contrast of two worlds, a present earthly and a future heavenly; the notion of the universality of evil, of inherited sin through Adam's disobedience, and the consequent belief in the inherent weakness and inability of man: these are among the elements underlying his ethical teaching which the apostle Paul brought over from his Jewish upbringing and education.

II.

The second feature which must be taken into account in the shaping of Paul's thought was, undoubtedly, the *Greco-Roman environment* amid which he grew up. The apostle was something more than a converted Hebrew Rabbi. His Gentile mission presupposes a wider preparation than that which his Jewish origin and education supplied. "I am debtor," he says, "both to Greeks and Barbarians." In him, indeed, Jew, Greek and Roman met, and his ethical outlook was coloured by the complex

civilization of his day. The extent and force of Hellenic influence upon the character and teaching of Paul is a subject upon which considerable diversity of opinion exists.¹

It is scarcely possible to imagine that the world-wide mission of the apostle could have emanated from the mind of a narrow Jew such as Renan and others conceive him to have been. Adaptability, curiosity, alertness, the love of investigation—peculiarly Greek traits—were among the most marked features of his character. In the Greek city of Tarsus, the centre of life and commerce, the home of philosophy and culture, the meeting place of east and west—every opportunity was afforded for the stimulation and exercise of these qualities. It was not surely without its significance for his after life-work that he of whom his Lord said: "He is a chosen vessel, to bear my name among the Gentiles," should be first a Jewish boy in the streets of a Greek town, in whose complex life there would be much to stir in an impressionable child dreams of a larger world.² Everywhere in the epistles of Paul we see evidences of his Greek environment. His mental imagery is not drawn, like that of Jesus, from the quieter aspects of nature, but from the scenes of human activity and the monuments of cultivated life. The language of the apostle is impregnated with the atmosphere of the city, and is alive with the bustle of the Roman world. The street, the market-place, the stadium, the arena, the temple, the traffic of a Greek seaport—these are the associations which have left their impress upon the

¹ Hausrath, Renan, Harnack, Farrar, Bruce, Stevens, are disposed to minimize it. On the other hand, Joh. Weiss, Pfeiderer, Baur, Lightfoot, Jowett, Hicks, Ramsay, may be cited as favouring the view.

² Art. "Paul," in Hastings, *Dict. of the Bible*.

writings of the apostle.¹ In Tarsus he learned to speak and to read Greek. His quotations are taken, not from the Hebrew Bible, but from the Greek Septuagint. "Speech," it has been truly said, "is not merely a formal thing: it is the unconscious vehicle, and to some extent the creator of ideas."² One cannot learn a foreign language without imbibing something of the thought of which the language is the expression. It has been the custom to minimize Paul's acquaintance with the Greek tongue, and to disparage his literary powers. It has been said that his writing is uncouth if vigorous, and that it bears little trace of classical culture. But the tendency of more recent scholars is largely to modify, if not to reverse this opinion. One of the most recent, and certainly not the least learned, authorities, Theodor Zahn, in his gigantic work, just translated into English, says: "Paul writes Greek, not like one who has laboriously acquired a foreign language in his riper years, but like one who has known it from his childhood."³ With wonderful skill he gives expression to every emotion of his rich and complex nature. Now in accents of touching pathos, now in tones of biting irony, and now with an irresistible rush of eloquence, he knows how to hold in thrall his hearers or readers. He can invest the meanest theme—the affair of a collection, or an unsavoury matter of discipline—with distinction; and whether he seeks to teach or prove, or controvert, the most unsympathetic readers to-day, like his opponents of his own time, are forced to acknowledge his dialectic power.⁴ If he sometimes repeats certain words, and reiterates turns of expression within a narrow compass,

¹ Cp. Howson, *Metaphors of Paul*.

² Wrede, *Paulus*.

³ *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, vol. i. p. 36 ff.

⁴ 2 Cor. x. 10: "His letters are weighty and powerful."

it is due to his intensity rather than to his poverty of language. What strikes us, taking his epistles as a whole, is the wealth of his vocabulary, rather than the paucity of his diction. To quote Zahn once more, "in comparison with the letters of Paul as literary productions, the Fourth Gospel is monotonous, and the Epistle of St. James poor." One cannot but form the impression from his letters and speeches that Paul was a highly cultured man, who was perfectly at home in all the forms of cultivated Greek society. There is no evidence that his familiarity with the poetic literature of Greece was due to casual hearsay, and was not the result of his own reading. It has been said that the few quotations which he makes from Greek poetry were brief and commonplace, of a popular proverbial character, implying no special classical knowledge. But there is nothing to show that these citations were current proverbs. Even if they were well-known sayings, his employment of them in the circumstances displayed both intimate knowledge and no little skill in adaptation. In writing to the Corinthians,¹ he quotes from the *Thais*, a lost play of Menander. In reproving the loose conduct of the Cretans,² he supports his reproach by an allusion to one of their own poets, a poet of Crete. And in addressing an audience in Athens, composed doubtless of Stoics and Epicureans, could anything be more apposite or dexterous than the clinching of his argument with a reference which would appeal to his Stoic hearers, as the quotation is to be found in more than one writer belonging to that particular school? "As certain of your own poets have said."³

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 33.

² Titus, i. 12.

³ Acts xvii. 28. Both Aratus and Cleanthes use the expression. Both lived for a period in Athens, and both were ornaments of the Stoic philosophy. See Zahn, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, vol. i. Notae, p. 51.

That Paul lived in a world saturated with Greek ideas is beyond doubt, and that he remained untouched by the prevailing thought of his time is hardly credible. But how far he was directly indebted to the prevalent philosophy of the Stoics is a question not so easily answered.

It will be impossible here to present anything like a full account of Stoicism as a system of philosophy, but it is necessary to touch on some aspects of it which offer points of contact with the ethical teaching of Paul.

To the Stoic philosopher this world was not a chaos but a well-ordered unity, at the centre of which was the *σπερματικὸς λόγος*—the generative reason, which was the seed or vital principle whence all things came and in virtue of which they lived. The whole universe was one polity—*πολιτεία του κόσμου*—held together by the spirit that was its origin and life.¹ Everything in the world, small and great, partook of the divine essence; but the soul of man, in so far as it shared the very nature of God, stood nearer to Him and was the special manifestation of His life. All men were of one blood, of one family—all and each, as Seneca says, were sacred to each and all.² "Man," says Epictetus, "is a fragment of divinity." The Stoic united universality with individuality—the universal essence and the individual soul—the God without and the God within. "Jupiter," says a Stoic writer, "is in all you see and all that lives within you."³ "Providence," says Epictetus, "is over all: nothing happens that is not appointed." To man God has given the best of all gifts—the faculty of reason. We may employ it to guide our lives. The external world

¹ See Glover, *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, p. 38.

² See Ed. Caird, *Evolution of Theology in Greek Philosophy*, vol. ii.; also Zeller, *Eclectics*, pp. 235-245.

³ Lucan quoted by Glover.

with its forces, we cannot alter or control; but we can make it serve us by living in harmony with it. "Confining yourself to what is within your power," says Epictetus. "To live harmoniously," says Zeno, "is the end of man's being"—a statement which Cleanthes developed by adding the words—"with nature."¹ To act in conformity with self, our fellow-men, and above all with God—is at once supreme wisdom and supreme happiness—the aim and ideal of life.

But Stoicism was not merely a great philosophy, it was a sublime system of ethics, and in the hands of its latest exponents it was a religion, a gospel of blessedness and life. It would be easy to cull from the writings of the Roman moralist sayings regarding providence, the Holy Spirit, communion with God, worship and self-examination, as well as precepts as to self-control, patience, submission, trust, pity, generosity, scarcely surpassed by the language of the New Testament. "The first lesson of Philosophy" says Epictetus, "is that there is a God and that he provides for the whole scheme of things: and it is not possible to screen from Him our acts or even our unspoken thought." "God is near you, with you, within you—a Holy Spirit resides within us, Spectator of our evil and our good, and our Guardian." "Man is a Son of God, and it is his part to be His interpreter, His soldier, to obey His signal and to await His call."² "We do not choose our parts in life: our simple duty is confined to playing them well. The slave may be as free as the consul: and freedom is the chief of blessings: it dwarfs all others: beside it all others are insignificant, with it all others are needless, without it no others are possible."³ Seneca tells us not only how

¹ See Glover.

² Epictetus.

³ Epictetus, *Manual and Fragments*.

God is to be worshipped, but from the right attitude to God he deduces the true relation to man. "We are members of a great body. Nature has made us of one blood and has planted in us mutual love. It is not therefore enough not to injure your brother, you ought to help him as well—must we not lend a hand to the shipwrecked, point the way to the wanderer, share our bread with the hungry. Let that verse be in your head and on your lips. . . . 'Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.'"¹ "Nothing is meaner," says Epictetus, "than love of pleasure, love of gain and insolence: nothing nobler than high-mindedness and gentleness and philanthropy and doing good." When asked how a man could grieve his enemy he answered, "by preparing himself to act in the noblest way"—a reply which reminds us of Paul's words, "in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

History has shown that Stoicism was a philosophy congenial to the Roman character. Vigorous, clear, if superficial, it appealed to the practical mind, and, as has been well said by Mr. Lecky, "it inspired nearly all the great characters of the early Roman Empire and nerved almost every attempt to maintain the dignity and freedom of the human soul."²

But while these quotations reveal the brighter side of Stoicism (and we have purposely dwelt upon this aspect to show its affinity with the teaching of Christianity) it must not be forgotten that there is a darker side. With all this talk of divine providence it was little more than an impersonal destiny which the Stoics recognized as governing the universe. This harmony with nature was simply a sense of proud self-sufficiency. "The

¹ Seneca, *Ep.* 95.

² *History of European Morals*, vol. i. chap. 2.

things within your power" is the refrain of Epictetus' teaching. Stoicism is the glorification of reason, even to the extent of suppressing all emotion. He only is a good man who lives in accordance with his reason, and what reason cannot justify must be extinguished. The Stoics had no real sense of sin. Sin is simply a blunder, an unreason. They recognized the presence of evil in the world and they believed in moral progress; but they had not that terrible consciousness of inner strife, "of another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity," which lies at the heart of Paul's ethical teaching. Hence salvation to them came not from within. It lay not in an inner power which renews and transforms man's nature, but in an external control of the passions, a subordination of desire to reason. The Roman moralists are more interested in the splendid conception of the divine harmony of the universe than in man's deliverance from evil, and the only counsel they can offer to the helpless and perplexed is to follow reason and live in conformity with the law of nature.

That there are remarkable affinities between Stoicism and Pauline ethics has been frequently pointed out, and the similarity both in language and sentiment can scarcely be accounted for by mere coincidence. The correspondence which was alleged by some of the early fathers¹ to have taken place between Seneca and Paul is now generally regarded as a forgery. But that there was some connection between the two systems of which they were the respective exponents can hardly be denied.

The twofold question arises, was Seneca indebted to Paul or was the latter influenced by the Roman moralist? With regard to the first question, it is sufficient to say

¹ Tertullian and Jerome.

that the writings of Seneca were of an earlier date than those of Paul, and generally that it is extremely unlikely that Stoicism was a conscious borrower of Christian ideas. But when we consider that Stoicism, as has been recently pointed out, was of eastern origin and owed many of its noblest ethical features to oriental teaching, we may understand how Roman moralists like Seneca and Epictetus, without having a direct knowledge of Christianity, may have been indebted to those Jewish and other kindred writings which, as we have seen, also largely influenced the apostle's teaching.

On the other hand, both indirectly and to some extent also directly, the ethics of Paul were indebted to Stoicism. That great moral system was the handmaid of the Gospel, and prepared the way in no small degree for its diffusion. The fusion of oriental thought with western culture constituted the character of Stoicism, and gave it its influence in the west at a time when moral unrest and dissatisfaction with the aim of social and political life made it most fashionable. The conquests of Alexander, which rendered the union of east and west for the first time possible, called forth the moral need which Stoicism expressed, but which Christianity finally met. The dream of the great conqueror of a universal dominion, in which all nationalities would be fused, prepared the way for the idea of Stoic cosmopolitanism—an idea which found its counterpart and fulfilment in the Christian conception of brotherhood.

But Stoicism not only created an atmosphere of thought and feeling favourable to Christianity, it also supplied a medium of language. It struck out those moral terms and images which at once suggested themselves to Paul as the most available and most suitable to describe the duties and privileges, the trials and triumphs of the

Christian life. Though indeed these expressions remained the same, yet in their new applications, when brought into the service of the Gospel, they were exalted and inspired with higher meanings. It is difficult for us to overrate the extent to which the Stoic philosophy leavened the moral vocabulary of the civilized world at the beginning of the Christian era. Words like "conscience," "virtue," "wisdom," "liberty," "the good, the true, the beautiful," though not of course originated by the Stoics, were made current coin by their repeated use of them. It was inevitable that the first Christian teachers should adopt the terms which they actually found in circulation.

Paul lived in a world which was simply saturated with Greek ideas. But there were special circumstances in his history which conduced without doubt to a more direct knowledge and appreciation of the truth of Stoicism.

Tarsus, the birthplace of Paul, was at this period a distinguished seat of learning, ranking, as Strabo tells us, with Alexandria and Athens. It was specially the stronghold of Stoic thought, and at least five of the most eminent teachers of that philosophy were professors in the university. It would be impossible, of course, to say whether Paul actually attended the lectures of these men. Yet it is scarcely conceivable that a young man like Paul, with a zeal for truth, could grow up in a place such as Tarsus was without receiving some mental stimulus from its academic thought. We know that Gamaliel himself was conversant with Greek philosophy and encouraged its study. Paul's speech at Athens, as we have already seen, shows more than a superficial acquaintance with the tenets of Stoicism, and it is not unlikely that after his conversion, when he returned to

Tarsus, where he remained for five years with his mission to the Gentiles definitely in view, he took advantage of the opportunities which his native town presented of studying at first hand the speculative systems of the day.

A number of parallel passages in the works of the Roman moralists and the epistles of Paul have been collected by various scholars,¹ a selection of which may be found in Lightfoot's essay on "Seneca and Paul" in his commentary to Philippians. They are too numerous and too close to be regarded as mere coincidences. But it is not in single expressions or isolated texts that the influence of Stoicism may be traced. It is much more in the general tone and complexion of thought, in the choice and trend of precept, in the common regard for the dignity and responsibility of life. It is noteworthy that many of the precepts which more particularly harmonize with the teaching of Stoicism were addressed to communities which were most likely to be familiar with the prevailing ethics of the day. Paul desires to be all things to all men, a Greek to the Greek no less than a Hebrew to the Hebrews; he takes advantage, therefore, of their knowledge, and appeals to ideals and conceptions of life to which his readers would readily assent. The Gospel, according to Paul, represented no narrow or negative view of life. It was to be rich and manifold. It was to appropriate all that was true and noble in the thoughts of men—"all things are yours and ye are Christ's."

There were indeed elements in Stoicism which St. Paul would not dream of assimilating, features of the system with which he could not possibly have any sympathy. He speaks with scathing scorn of "knowledge that puffeth up,"

¹ Fleury, Aubertin, Farrar, Lightfoot, Joh. Weiss.

of "philosophy falsely so called," and he has nothing but contempt for the tricks of the rhetorician and the windy disputations of the sophist, "the foolish and unlearned questions that gender strife," with which he could not but be familiar in a place like Tarsus, which prided itself on its intellectual superiority. The Pantheistic view of God and the material conception of the world, the self-conscious pride, the absence of all sense of sin and need of pardon, the temper of apathy and indifference, the unnatural suppression of feeling and false asceticism, were features of Stoicism which could not but rouse in the apostle's mind strong antagonism.

But, on the other hand, there were certain well-known characteristics of a nobler order in Stoic morality which Paul does not hesitate to incorporate with his teaching and employ in the service of the Gospel.

Of these we may mention the immanence of God as the efficient and final cause of all life and activity, the true idea of wisdom or knowledge as the ideal of man, the true conception of freedom as the prerogative of the individual, and the notion of brotherhood as the goal of society.

1. The view of *Divine Immanence*. Paul would have repudiated the Stoic notion of Pantheism, but there are certain passages in which he balances the Hebrew idea of divine transcendence with the Greek idea of divine immanence. This habit of complementing truths under antagonistic forms is a characteristic of the apostle. While he represents God as the "maker," the "builder," the "potter," the "husbandman"—figures implying the divine transcendence—he also combines with them the Stoic view of immanence. Thus, in his speech upon Mar's Hill, when he was actually addressing a Stoic audience, he appealed to the Stoic view of God—"the

God in whom we live and move and have our being." In harmony with Greek philosophy, Paul discerns the divine presence and agency throughout the whole of nature and of life. For him not less than for Plato and Aristotle, the Neo-Platonists and the Stoics, the world was one, everywhere instinct with the divine spirit. "For what else is nature," asks Seneca, "but God and divine reason, immanent in the world and all its parts." "What is God? The sum total of all thou seest, and all thou canst not see."¹ And in like manner Paul declares that to us "there is but one God, the Father of whom are all things, and we in Him and the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him."² If God is immanent in nature, He must be immanent in man, as the Stoics contended, since man is a part of nature. Man's whole personality for Paul also is an integral part of a divine system. His very body is the temple of God. The indwelling spirit acts upon the material organism, moulding it into gradual accordance with itself: "till the expression of the eye, the lines of the face, the tones of the voice, the touch of the hand, the movements, manners, and gracious demeanour, all reveal, with increasing clearness, the nature of the spirit that has made them what they are. Thus the interior beauty of holiness comes by degrees to be a visible thing; and through His action upon our spirit, God is manifest in our flesh."³ But even more clearly God is immanent in man by reason of his conscience, that mysterious attribute which expresses at once the innermost self, and also something "not ourselves which makes for righteousness." This categorical imperative, or authoritative voice which we

¹ Seneca, *Nat. En.* ii. 45.

² 1 Cor. viii. 6.

³ Illingworth, *Divine Immanence*, chap. 4.

can only ascribe to God, bears witness, according to Paul, to the divine spirit within man :

“As God's most intimate Presence in the Soul
And His most perfect Image in the world.”¹

It is as men are true to this inner voice, to the God within them, that they realize the holiness of the God without them. In all the spiritual struggles of their inner nature, men have been aware of divine intervention and assistance, of God working with them. No one was more conscious of this than Paul himself. Hence, while pursuing their own efforts along natural lines, he bids the Corinthians work in the full faith that they are co-workers with God. And writing to the Philippians, while he bids them “work out their own salvation,” he reminds them that “it is God that worketh in them both to will and to do.” The natural order of things—the forces of nature and the agency of man—is the channel through which God is evermore revealing Himself and realizing His purpose. This, which is a fundamental principle of Stoicism, is one of the great truths of St. Paul—the recognition of the divine will in all life, and the loyal effort to make that will dominant in every sphere of activity—first in the hidden life of the spirit, and then in the family, in society, in the church, in the world of trade, art, and literature—in every field of human interest. Nature and grace, the secular and the sacred, the human and the divine do not stand in exclusive antithesis, but are rather parts of a divine whole, knit and interwoven in mutual penetration.

2. The idea of *Wisdom* is also a prominent idea of the Stoics. The wise man is the ideal man. He is sufficient unto himself. He wants nothing. He alone is free and

¹ Wordsworth.

happy. He is king of the world, the true possessor of all wealth. The ideal of the Stoic seems to have stirred both the earnestness and irony of Paul. He sees the emptiness and futility of wisdom based, as the Stoic based it, on self-isolation and proud independence. But he also acknowledges the beauty of such wisdom when it is founded on entire reliance upon and union with an unseen power. The Christian is the wise man; he is king. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Of himself and his fellows in the ministry he says: "as being grieved yet always rejoicing, as beggars yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things." "I have learned," he says again, "in whatever circumstances I am to be self-sufficing." "I have all things to the full and overflowing." To be wise in Christ, to find our wealth in Him, that for the apostle is the true realization of the proud ideal which the Stoic philosophers had painted in such attractive colours.¹

3. The idea of *Freedom*, again, is one of the great ideas which the world owes to Hellenism. It has shown that the freedom of the individual should be consistent with an ordered and articulate government.² No other ancient people aimed so steadfastly as the Greeks at freedom as the greatest good of life, and though the order and safety of the state was sometimes endangered by the pursuit of individual freedom, tending, as it did, to degenerate into licence and caprice, yet it was the glory of Greece to have formulated this notion: and no greater service have her philosophers rendered to the world than just the presentment and development of this ideal.

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 8; iv. 10; iii. 22; 2 Cor. vi. 10; ix. 8, 11; Phil. iv. 11, 13, 18.

² Ramsay, *Cities of St. Paul*, p. 34.

No one can read the epistles of Paul without recognizing that among Christian teachers he is at once the earliest and the most strenuous champion of freedom. At the very outset of his missionary work he made a stand for liberty—setting himself in this respect not only in opposition to the traditions of the Pharisaic School, but even to the teaching of the apostles. It can scarcely be doubted that this spirit of emancipation which he inculcates was caught from his contact with the freer political life which he witnessed and enjoyed as a Roman citizen of Tarsus. It is especially in writing to the group of Galatian cities that Paul insists on the idea of freedom.¹ He urges them to stand fast in the freedom with which Christ had set them free. He reminds them that they were called to freedom. There was indeed a special need for insisting on this idea in writing to the Galatians, but the idea was to Paul an essential and fundamental part of the new social order which he desired to realize.

While in the first instance it was freedom from Jewish ritual that Paul insisted on, it would be a mistake to limit the idea to such a relationship. Freedom in one particular involves freedom of mind and freedom of action in general, and it is not too much to say that Paul had in view the larger social and political freedom which undoubtedly follows from religious liberty. Let a man realize what he is, let him know his status as a Christian, and all kinds of liberty must be his, liberty of thought, of action and of judgment. The general tone of Paul's epistles shows that he had a strong sympathy with the freedom of life and thought which marked Greek society amid which he had grown up at Tarsus; and we are justified

¹ Ramsay, *Cities of St. Paul*, p. 36.

in asserting, as Sir Wm. Ramsay points out, "that the freedom which he champions in the letter to the Galatians was the freedom which the world owes to Greek civilization—a freedom, 'in which Grecian licence mingles with and is toned by Christian principle.'"¹

4. The idea of *brotherhood* follows naturally from that of freedom, and here again we think the apostle has been influenced by the cosmopolitan tenets of the Stoics. There rose before the minds of the Roman moralists the vision of a universal commonwealth in which all men were equal. The far-reaching power of the Roman Empire seemed to give to this dream a concrete form. "We are members of a vast body," exclaims Seneca, "Nature made us kin, when she produced us from the same things and to the same ends."² "We measure the boundaries of our state with the sun." "Virtue is barred to none, she is open to all. She invites all . . . freedmen, slaves, kings, exiles alike."³ "Wherever a *man* is there is room for doing good."

Do we not seem to hear an echo of this language in many passages of Paul? It is surely no mere coincidence that he exclaims, "our citizenship is in heaven." "Ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and members of God's household."⁴ Of the many texts to be found in all the epistles suggesting the same thought, we quote but one more, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Thus here, as in the other cases, Paul used the Stoic

¹ *Cities of St. Paul*, p. 37 ff.

² Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* xc. 52.

³ *De Benif.* iii. 18.

⁴ Phil. iii. 20, Eph. ii. 19, Phil. i. 27, Rom. xii. 5, Gal. iii. 28, Col. iii. 11.

imagery—but the ideas are cleansed from their alloy and transmuted into pure gold. What was merely a theory, a dream to the Stoic, became a practical principle to the Christian. Greek cosmopolitanism is transfigured into Christian brotherhood. Here, as elsewhere, the magic word "*in Christ*" changes and glorifies the whole conception. As Lightfoot finely says: "A living soul has been breathed into the marble statue by Christianity, and thus from the much admired polity of Zeno arises the *Civitas Dei* of St. Augustine."¹

III.

The third element which, as we saw, must be taken account of in considering the ethic of Paul is that of *personal conviction*—the new experience which came to him and changed his whole life and thought. This is the most important element in the man, without which the other two have little value. This personal plastic influence took up into itself all that the past contributed, and moulded the various impressions and experiences of his history into one all-embracing purpose, subordinating all previous elements to one over-mastering principle. It will, however, be unnecessary to dwell upon this influence, because it has been repeatedly referred to and assumed in all that has been already said.

The life-course of the Pharisaic zealot came to a sudden end. Paul belonged to that rare class of men whose life has been split into two halves by a single overpowering experience. A cleft, sudden and decisive, took place in his history reaching down to his innermost soul, which made him another man, and changed completely his whole outlook and life-plan. What has been

¹ *Commentary on Philippians.*

called his conversion, which took place on the way to Damascus, was the turning-point of his career. He became a new creature, old things passed away, and an entirely new spirit and purpose animated him. The revolution indeed at the inmost heart of it was intellectual not less than moral. Even as Pharisee he had served God with passionate devotion and strenuous integrity. He did not need, like other converts, to turn from a life of overt sin, or to forsake a course of sensual pleasure and worldliness. The error of his life lay not in moral delinquency or even disobedience, but rather in a misconception of Christ, in a perverted idea of duty. His conversion was, therefore, a radical change of conviction which transformed his whole life. The basis of it was a new revelation. Christ appeared to him in a new light, and he responded with the whole force of his personality. "Henceforth he was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Life had a new meaning for him. What he had formerly regarded as loss was now gain. All his past experiences were recognized as parts of a providential preparation for his life-work. All along he had been God's chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles and the children of Israel. Of his Gentile relations not less than of his Jewish antecedents he is surely thinking, when, in the introductory verses of his letter to the Galatians, he describes the chief stages of his life.¹ In the call of God to preach Christ which he recognized as the epoch-making event in his career, he sees a divine purpose for which he was destined even from his mother's womb, and for which his whole early life was a preparation. The family, the surroundings, the education of Paul had been selected by God to fit him for what he was to become, the apostle of the Gentiles.

¹ Cf. Ramsay, *Cities of St. Paul*, p. 86.

And yet, notwithstanding this revolution in his career, Paul the Pharisee and Paul the Christian were not two different persons, but really one and the same. The direction of his effort was indeed wholly altered. Other experiences were incorporated and his personality was enriched, but fundamentally he remained the same. The old fire, the former zeal and intensity, the fervour and passionate energy with which he had persecuted believers were the same, only they were now gathered up and directed into a new channel. All his natural faculties and powers were baptized with a new spirit, animated with a new soul, and consecrated to a new and nobler service.

St. Paul did not cease to be a Jew, nor did he cease to be a Greek when he became a Christian. He united both elements in a higher synthesis. Each contributed to and enriched his conception of life. The one partly corrected and partly complemented the other. The narrower and partial aspects of Judaism and Hellenism fell into the background, while the broader and larger truths of both were brought into prominence. The austere view of God as transcendent sovereign, the rigid regard for law, the painful effort after outward obedience, gave place to a more gracious conception of the divine Fatherhood and to a more spiritual idea of man's relation to God. On the other hand, the inadequacies of Hellenism, its lack of a sense of sin, its inadequate view of divine personality, its mechanical idea of determinism and destiny, were corrected and balanced by these religious truths which St. Paul inherited from his Hebrew upbringing. Law and love, justice and mercy, nature and spirit were harmonized in a higher unity. Paul was debtor both to the Jew and the Greek, and became by his conversion a disciple and exponent of One in whom there is neither bond nor free.

We should form an inadequate and misleading idea of Paul if we were content to explain his personality and work by these influences which we have considered. There has been too great a tendency, especially on the part of such writers as Baur, Holsten, and Pfeiderer, to explain the man Paul by his past and to refer the various items of his teaching to this or that Jewish or Greek source. We must allow something to his native originality. It is, indeed, true that no man is independent of his environment. Even the greatest is the child of the past, the product of his age. But there is in some men an unknown personal something we call genius, in virtue of which they make a fresh start in the world's history and give to humanity a new inspiration. There is, indeed, a sense in which it may be said that a man like Paul, so far from being the creature of his time, is a maker of all time. Genius, like Melchizedec, is without father and mother—a spiritual fact which cannot be classified or accounted for. It is said that if Stephen had not prayed, Paul had not preached: certainly if Christ had not been, there had been no apostle of the Gentiles. But when all is said, it must be recognized that Paul was no mere borrower or importer of other men's thoughts. We must protest against the tendency to account for the apostle Paul by "Eclectic patchwork."¹ Let us allow that Paul was acquainted with Philo (though Pfeiderer doubts this), let us admit that he was intimate with Alexandrian philosophy and more especially with the *Book of Wisdom*, which is a literary product of the same Greek spirit, let us acknowledge his cognisance of Stoicism and his study under its famous teachers in

¹ Cp. Bruce, *St. Paul's Conception of Christ*, p. 218; also Beyschlag, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, vol. ii. p. 23.

Tarsus, yet who can doubt that these elements are all transmuted and worked up by the creative mind of the apostle into something entirely new and original. Neither Hebrewism nor Hellenism will account for this man and his teaching. He marks a new beginning. He breaks with the past, and sets forth upon a fresh and undiscovered path of religion and ethical thought.

The great achievement of this man is that he took up that which was Greek and that which was Jewish—fused the two elements, and then entirely subordinated them to a third, the Christian, in Jesus Christ as he understood Him.¹ It is not, therefore, the amalgamation of Hellenism and Hebrewism, but the conquest of both for his Master that assigns to Paul his high place in the world's history. Henceforth his estimate of things is entirely a different one. He reverses his former judgments and makes a complete revaluation of worths. He sets up a new ideal and standard of life because he now knows a new motive as well as a new power to realize it. Christ becomes the measure and touchstone of duty, and every word of his epistles flows from his Christian consciousness. What he himself has become, he will make others. The inner power which has transformed his own life, he will communicate to the souls of men. Redemption through Christ is his new watchword. But his purpose is not exhausted in his missionary efforts to save the lost. He aims likewise at the shaping and unfolding of the practical life of mature Christians. He combines with his theology of salvation a new and nobler system of morals. All the elements of his past experience unite to make St. Paul really the first Christian moralist, the creator of Christian ethic.

¹ Wernle, *Anfänge*, p. 222.

CHAPTER III

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ST. PAUL

IN this chapter it will be our object to enquire what view the apostle held with regard to the "natural man"; what substratum of powers, physical, mental, and moral, constituted the raw material of the new creature in Christ. We are bound to assume such a substratum. If man in a state of nature was without any knowledge of, or affinity for, the truth, and possessed no powers or faculties of body and mind to which the spirit could appeal, the Christian life would be simply a kind of magical phenomenon—a creation indeed, but a creation out of nothing, having no connection with the past history of the individual. But this is nowhere the view of scripture. It is not the teaching of our Lord nor of any of His apostles.

That Christian morality is the creation of God and is not to be accounted for on naturalistic principles, is indeed everywhere assumed in the New Testament. At the same time the moral life is nowhere regarded as an irresistible achievement, but is always viewed in its connection with human responsibility and human freedom. The spirit which takes hold of a man and renews his life, is not conceived as a foreign power which breaks the continuity of consciousness. It is not a new personality

so much as the completion and fulfilment of the old. The spirit of God does not quench the natural faculties of man, but works through them and upon them, raising them to a higher value. Hence the consciousness of Christians, that they are the recipients of a divine power enabling them to live a higher life, presupposes a natural capacity or disposition for the reception of such a supernatural influence. The natural is the ground of the spiritual. Man is made for God. And if there was not that in him which predisposed him for the higher life, Christianity would be but a mechanical or magical appearance without ethical import or significance. But this is by no means the view of Paul. While he regards the new principle acting in and upon man, all pre-Christian morality is not therefore vain and valueless. A large domain of conduct is common to the Christian and the non-Christian. Nor are the so-called Pagan virtues of honesty, truthfulness, temperance, justice, without their relative value. The heathen are neither incapable of right actions nor unaccountable for their doings. Man, as such, is not wholly averse from good or wholly disposed to evil. Degrees of depravity are to be distinguished in nations and individuals, and a measure of noble aspiration and earnest effort is to be recognized in ordinary human nature. It has been said by some, notably by Wernle, that the apostle in the interest of salvation grossly exaggerates the conditions of the natural man. "Paul," says Wernle, "first violently extinguished every other light in the world so that Jesus might then shine in it alone": and again, "he made all men outside of the church as bad as possible." Surely this is an overstatement of the case. It must be admitted that no more scathing denunciation of sinful human nature was ever presented than

the account of heathen immorality to be found in the first chapter of Romans. Yet the apostle does not actually affirm, nor does he imply, that Pagan society was so utterly corrupt that it had lost all knowledge of moral good. Though it was so bad as to be beyond all hope of recovery of itself by natural means, it was not so bad that it had quenched in utter darkness the light which lighteth every man. When he declares that "the Gentiles which have no law do by nature the things of the law, these having no law are a law unto themselves: in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts," Paul plainly assumes some knowledge and performance on the part of the heathen. In another passage he rebukes the Christians of Corinth for permitting a vice which even the consciences of the heathen condemned. And in yet another epistle he appeals to the existing ethical standards of his day as standards for his own converts.¹ "Whatsoever things are true, noble, just, pure, lovely and of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." The conclusion, then, to which we are led by these and other passages, and still more by the whole tenor of Paul's teachings, is that he not only assumed that man had originally a certain knowledge of duty, but also recognized a substratum of natural endowments and faculties upon which the Christian life was to be reared.

The "Psychology of Paul" or the attempt to exhibit in their order and connection the Pauline presuppositions with regard to the nature of the unregenerate man, is a study which is attended with considerable difficulty. First, and chiefly, because the apostle nowhere states his

¹ See *Expositor*, vol. xi. p. 201, "Papers on Ethical Teaching of St. Paul," by Rev. Geo. Jackson.

conception of human nature previous to conversion in any definite and systematic form. He does not write as a philosopher. He has no interest in theoretic discussion, nor is he always careful to avoid contradictions. Also, he looks back upon man, from a Christian standpoint, with all the preconceptions of man, of sin, and of human freedom which that implies. Every word of his epistles flows from his Christian consciousness, and even those terms which refer to unregenerate man are tinged and suffused with the light of a Christian significance. That being so, it is no easy task to disentangle the apostle's pre-Christian from his post-Christian conceptions, or to determine with any exactness his view of the natural man. All we can attempt here is to

- I. State and examine the various terms employed by Paul in reference to man's nature ;
- II. Show their relation and interdependence in the apostle's use of them ;
- III. Indicate their significance for the ethical life of the Christian.

I

It may be convenient to present in one view the principal terms of Pauline usage, and to state their generally accepted meanings. The Greek language is uncommonly rich in words expressive of man's natural powers, both of body and mind, and Paul has availed himself largely of the wealth which lay to his hands—a fact somewhat obscured in our English version with its more limited range of expression.

At least seven distinct terms play their part in the Pauline psychology: Flesh (Σάρξ), Body (Σῶμα), Spirit (Πνεῦμα), Soul (Ψυχή), Heart (Καρδιά), Mind (Νοῦς), Conscience (Συνείδησις, Συνειδός).

Regarding these terms more particularly we find: (1) *Flesh*, or Σάρξ, is sometimes the living tissue which clothes the human skeleton; sometimes man's physical nature in its entirety, *e.g.* "the life which we now live in the flesh." Again, it is the medium through which natural relationships manifest themselves—descent, family and natural affinity—as, "born after the flesh." More important, from an ethical point of view, is its frequent use to describe the natural side of man as contrasted with the spiritual. Here the term begins to be charged with ethical implications, and is used as interchangeable with "man" or the "old man," in contrast to πνεῦμα and in close association with sin. The apostle also employs two adjectives—σαρκικός and σάρκινος, the former translated "fleshy," meaning composed of flesh, as "the fleshy tablets of the heart"; and the latter "carnal" or "fleshly," that is belonging to man and not to God. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal."

(2) Σῶμα is the general term for "body" as an organism composed of parts (μέλη), and itself serving as an organ for the soul or spirit with which it is associated. This word is also used in a figurative sense of the Church, the "body" of Christ.

(3) Πνεῦμα, the breath, denotes, in classical Greek, the vital principle, but is never so employed by Paul, who uses it rather in the psychological sense of spirit or mind of man, the inward self-conscious principle which feels, thinks and wills, *e.g.* 1 Cor. ii. 11: "For what man knoweth the things of a man save the *spirit* of man which is in him?" Apart from this application to man, it is most frequently employed in the spiritual sense of a divine power or influence belonging to God, and communicated in Christ to men, in virtue of which they become πνευματικοί or spiritual. Thus the apostle

speaks of the "Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," "the Holy Spirit."

(4) *Ψυχή* indicates the individual life, the seat of the personal ego, the self; and more specially the mind as the sentient principle, the source of sensation and desire, as in Eph. vi. 6, "doing the will of God *from the heart*," or, as in Col. iii. 23, "whatsoever ye do, do it *heartily* (from the soul) as to the Lord." In 1 Thess. v. 23, it is associated with *πνεῦμα* and *σῶμα*, "I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless." The adjective, *Ψυχικός*, translated natural, is used in contrast to *πνευματικός*, spiritual.

(5) *Καρδιά* is more comprehensive in meaning than the word "heart," and signifies generally the inner central organ of the personal life in man. It is the seat of the intelligence, the receptacle of impressions, the source of moral choice and decision, the organ of feeling and emotion, and the object generally of the various operations of the divine spirit. Equivalent to the inner or hidden life, it is contrasted with the outward appearance, and especially with the mouth, the organ of expression. "With the heart man believeth: with the mouth confession is made."

(6) *Νοῦς* is the mind or reflective faculty which consciously acts in the way of pronouncing moral judgments. It is frequently translated "understanding." "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also."¹ In Phil. iv. 7 it is associated with the heart. The peace of God which passeth all understanding (*πάντα ποῦν*) shall keep your hearts and minds (*τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ νοήματα*).

The apostle uses two peculiar expressions. In Eph. iv. 23 he speaks of "the spirit of your mind," and in

¹ Cor. xiv. 14 ff.

Col. ii. 18, of "the mind of the flesh." Without entering here upon the large discussion which these expressions have called forth,¹ it is enough to say that we agree with the view of those who regard the *νοῦς* as having the divinely given *πνεῦμα* as its animating and impelling principle, and who therefore see in "the spirit of the mind" that which is diametrically opposed to the *νοῦς τῆς σαρκός*, the mind as directed and controlled by the flesh.

(7) *Συνείδησις*, *Συνειδός*, signified originally the human consciousness; but in the language of the Stoics, and hence in Hellenistic usage generally, it received the narrower signification of conscience, and in this sense it is usually employed in the New Testament, and particularly by Paul. The apostle regards it as a natural power, by which man pronounces upon the rightness or wrongness of his own actions, as in Romans ii. 15, where it refers to the heathen—"their consciences also bearing witness." The conscience may be darkened or blinded, it may be illumined and stimulated. There may be a good conscience as well as a bad conscience, but no one dare act against one's conscience, nor is it conceivable that it can be wholly destroyed. It has been remarked that this word *συνείδησις* is perhaps the only word which Paul uses throughout with uniform consistency of meaning. While the other terms which we have referred to are employed with no very marked precision, this term is always used in the same definite way as corresponding to the modern idea of conscience. The use of *συνείδησις* is so definite and consistent as to suggest that it must have been taken over by the apostle from contemporary Greek thought as a full-fledged idea.²

¹ See Prof. Dickson, *Flesh and Spirit*, pp. 441 ff.

² See Lightfoot, *Com. on Philippians*; and Laidlaw, *Bible Doctrine of Man*.

II.

Having thus briefly examined and defined the various terms which Paul employs, we may proceed to indicate their relation. It is true that Paul does not explicitly state their connection or interdependence. But from his employment of them separately and in association, it is obvious that he did not regard them as independent and distinct constituents standing side by side and all of equal importance. He speaks of the body of man, and by inference of the life of man, as an organism or organic whole of many parts which are interrelated and reciprocally subservient to each other. There must be some kind of unity or hierarchy of the natural powers of man; and amid all the difference of function, and underlying all the variety of operation, it is undeniable that the apostle assumed a unity of consciousness, a single ego or personal identity.¹

All the elements therefore which we have enumerated may be said to come under two or at most three heads. According to Paul human nature is constituted of body and spirit; or, if we draw a distinction, as some maintain Paul does, between $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ and $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$, of three elements, body, soul and spirit. On the basis of a passage in the earliest of the Pauline epistles, 1 Thess. v. 23, where $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$, $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ and $\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha$ are brought together, as if they were separate constituent elements, various Biblical psychologists² have elaborated a theory of a threefold division of man as having the support of Paul. Without discussing the vexed question as to whether the apostle adopts the twofold or the threefold division, we may say that the writers who contend for the threefold

¹ 1 Cor. xii. ; Rom. xii. 4.

² Usteri, Neander, Lünemann, Auberlen, Beck, Delitzsch and Heard.

constitution, though they show much philosophical ingenuity, can scarcely be regarded as successful from an exegetical point of view. Biblical facts, as Prof. Dickson says, do not lend themselves to modern psychological distinctions foreign to Jewish modes of thought.¹ The argument for the threefold scheme is, as we have seen, based upon the words, "I pray God that your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless." But this passage not only stands alone in the earliest of the Pauline epistles, there is in it no mention of the term "flesh" or σάρξ which plays so important a part in the later epistles. Many passages, among others Romans viii. 10 ff., 1 Cor. vii. 34, 2 Cor. vii. 1, indicate that Paul recognizes in the natural man only a twofold division—body and soul; and that when he attributes to him in addition a spirit, as in 1 Cor. ii. 11, Eph. iv. 23, this is not as in the regenerate, a third division, but merely the soul viewed in its higher or Godward side—the sphere of the religious life, the recipient of grace or divine renewal, the capacity for the divine life imparted by the Holy Spirit.²

According to the apostle then, as we interpret him, man is a unity constituted of body and soul; on the one hand there is the body or flesh, words which the apostle seems to use indiscriminately; and on the other hand there is the soul or the spiritual side of man.³

1. Regarding man first in his *higher or spiritual side* the ψυχή or soul may be taken as the most general term of which the reason, heart and conscience are special aspects. Soul is not in Paul's view something between body and spirit, but is regarded as their unity—the

¹ *Flesh and Spirit*, p. 173.

² Cp. Paterson, *The Apostle's Teaching*, p. 31.

³ Cp. W. N. Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 183.

living self underlying both the bodily forms and spiritual faculties of man. It is the vital and animating principle which is at once the source of all the sensations of the body as well as the seat of the higher cognitive faculties. This non-bodily part of man may be viewed in its relation to God or in relation to the life it is living in the body on the earth. In the first case it is regarded as akin to God, and as adapted to communion with God and capable of His indwelling: in this highest relation it is termed "spirit." In the second case it is regarded as related to the body which it inhabits, and is inherent in all the experiences and activities of the earthly life: in this sense it is more specially called the soul. But whether viewed on its Godward or on its earthly side, the soul is simply the central fact or distinctive feature of man, of which the heart, mind and conscience are the specially spiritual endowments witnessing to God and His truth, and enabling man to feel the spell of goodness.

The *heart* is never used as $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ is of the subject to whom the individual life belongs, or like $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ to denote the principle of that life divinely given. It signifies generally the seat or organ of the personal life of man regarded in and by himself, and hence is constantly accompanied by the possessive pronoun "my," "thy," "his," "our," "your." There is no sharp distinction in New Testament language as there is in English between the head and the heart. While the heart, therefore, is more generally the seat of feeling, $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ or *mind* is more especially the organ of intelligence; and though it is scarcely to be distinguished from $\kappa\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$, it has in Paul's use of it a special significance as the highest expression of man's mental faculty—as that to which the divine law makes appeal. Its field of exercise is especially

ethical, and its functions relate pre-eminently to the moral side of life—to action upon the will.

But while the mind impels the will to do its behests, it offers no judgment as to the moral content of the will, and does not of itself decide whether an action is good or evil. This function is reserved for the "law" regarded as the norm of will, not made by man, but written by God Himself on man's heart.¹ It is this "law" which gives to *conscience* its content. And conscience as a divinely appointed innate faculty of man's being bears unmistakable witness to God. This word, which probably came to Paul from Stoic sources, bears more than almost any other word in the epistles the aspect of modernity. The apostle uses it frequently in his writings, and always in the meaning it has for modern thought. If we were to attempt to bring it into line with the other terms we have been considering, it might be reckoned as a function of the spirit or soul in so far as it signifies "self-consciousness"; and as an expression of the heart or mind when regarded as moral approval or disapproval. In any case conscience is not a special or separate organ existing alongside of the mind and heart, but simply a function of man's soul by which he discerns the truth of God. It is broadly equivalent in Paul's usage to the "Daemon" of Socrates, to the "Light of Nature" of later philosophy, or to "the moral sense" of Shaftesbury, and is thus a point of contact between God and man. Among the heathen Paul says, "God did not leave Himself without a witness." Again, in the course of his argument in the first chapter of Romans, in order to show that the Jew as little as the Gentile can be justified by legal obedience, the apostle incidentally dwells upon the manifestation of God which is made

¹ Rom. ii. 15.

directly to the conscience of the heathen man—"their conscience also bearing witness."

There is probably no subject which requires more thorough investigation, as there is none which involves greater difficulty, than that of conscience. Whatever theory we may hold as to its origin,¹ whether the intuitionist, which regards it as an innate and complete faculty in man, or the evolutionist, which treats it as historico-psychologically, and views it as a function gradually developed through the influences of custom, law, education and the complex action of the hereditary belief and wisdom of the race, there can be no doubt that it is the distinctively ethical element in man, and that Paul was right in presupposing in mankind a certain inherent and inalienable faculty or organ which recognizes the good and the true and responds to the divine. Conscience may be developed and educated, but it is there from the beginning in some rudimentary or at least potential form, and it gives to the whole consciousness or spiritual personality at each stage of life its moral worth.

It is not, however, with the origin of conscience, but with its capacities and functions in its developed state that ethics is primarily concerned. The tendency of modern physiological accounts of conscience is to undermine its authority and pave the way for a complete moral irresponsibility. But no theory of its origin must be permitted to invalidate the authority of its judgments, and we may be justly suspicious of any system which

¹ See P. Rée, *Ursprung des Gewissens*; Munsterberg, *Ursprung der Sittlichkeit*; Gass, *Lehre vom Gewissen*. Intuitionists: Shaftesbury, Hume, Adam Smith, Rousseau, Butler, Kant, Fichte, Janet. Evolutionists: Darwin, Spencer, Stephen, Höffding. Cp. also for general treatment: Paulsen, *System of Ethics*, and Newnan Smyth, *Christian Ethics*.

tends to depersonalize man.¹ Conscience is the faculty of moral perception, and it needs, like other intellectual faculties, to be cultivated and developed. Paul dwells upon the necessity of growing in spiritual knowledge and perception.² Thus the Gentiles became darkened in their understanding, and were given over to a reprobate mind.³ Conscience needs therefore to be constantly corrected, educated and invigorated,⁴ and this is in one aspect the supreme task of life. It has been maintained that, according to the teaching of the New Testament, conscience "bears witness not only to a better and worse in human action, but to the existence of a higher than myself, a Person to whom I am spiritually akin and who has rights over me—the right of control and command,"⁵

"God's most intimate presence in the Soul."

It is that through which God speaks to man in the successive strata of his development; that by which man recognizes God's will as his supreme law. The conscience becomes Christian as it is mastered by Christ. The effect of conversion is to raise the natural conscience to a higher value. Under the transforming power of the spirit, the whole man, of whom conscience is the immediate organ, is confronted with a higher ideal, and is awakened to a larger sense of responsibility.

Summing up the psychical or spiritual side of man, we may say that, according to Paul, the "ego" or soul is one, and is constituted of three main elements—heart, reason and conscience—in virtue of which it is capable of apprehending, appropriating, and approving the world of good or of evil. The heart, as the emotional and

¹ Cp. Ottley, *Christian Ideas and Ideals*, p. 59.

² Phil. i. 9.

³ Rom. i. 21, 28.

⁴ 1 Cor. viii. 7 ff. ; x. 25 ff.

⁵ Ottley, *ibid.* p. 60.

impressionable part, receives impressions of objects; the reason enlightens, coordinates and assorts them; the conscience judges, approves or disapproves; and all together prompt the will to action.

2. So far the faculties which we have been considering represent the higher side of man's being. Let us turn now to the *lower outer side*—that part of man's nature which somehow easily lends itself to sin, and even in the regenerate state acts as a formidable foe of the Christian life. Nowhere does the apostle offer an abstract doctrine of the body, and when he speaks of it, it is usually as a fact of Christian experience with which every believer has to do in striving after holiness. The point of view is indicated in his exhortation to the Galatians, "Walk in the spirit and do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary to each other, so that ye may not do the things that ye would."¹ He also writes in a similar strain in the epistle to the Romans, "We are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh ye must die, but if by the spirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live."² The opposition between the flesh and the spirit is thus strongly emphasized. It is for every earnest man a fight between two opposing elements—a matter of life and death. The struggle is one which belongs not to the Christian state alone. The opposition is already apparent in the natural man, as we may gather from the seventh chapter of Romans. But its strength and peculiarity lie in the fact that the struggle is not over when we enter on the Christian life. And Paul shows in a significant passage that he himself knows by experience the seriousness of this conflict and the need

¹ Gal. v. 16, 17.

² Rom. viii. 12, 13.

of constant watchfulness and effort. "I buffet my body," he says to the Corinthians, "and bring it into bondage, lest by any means, after having preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." Now in these passages both words "body" and "flesh" are used, and in so far as they are each regarded as obstructing holiness, they would seem to be for the apostle synonymous terms. He warns his readers against the flesh, while it is with the body that he himself wages a persistent warfare. This indiscriminate use of both words scarcely bears out the distinction which Holsten, Lüdemann and Pfeiderer seek to substantiate, that the word "flesh" indicates the *material* of which the "body" consists, while the word "body" is the *form* of the material organism. This distinction has been made, as has been pointed out,¹ in the interests of a theory that Paul shared the Greek view of all bodily matter as inherently evil. But this supposition falls to the ground when we find that Paul, contrary to the Greek view, regards both the *σῶμα* and the *σὰρξ* as equally sanctifiable. Sometimes, indeed, it might seem as if the apostle did regard the body or the flesh as incurably bad. Thus he speaks of killing the deeds of the body, and of the body as dead on account of sin. But far more frequently the body is represented as the subject of sanctification not less than the soul or spirit. In the passage already quoted the apostle prays, "that the whole spirit, soul and body may be preserved blameless,"² *σῶμα* being the word used. But in 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11, the two words are interchanged, and the thought is that the life-power of Christ revealing itself in the mortal body of the apostle may exercise itself upon

¹ Prof. Dickson, *Flesh and Spirit*; and Prof. Bruce, *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*.

² 1 Thess. v. 23.

the members of the Church. More decisive still is the passage in 2 Cor. vii. 1, "Having therefore these promises let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Here it will be noted "flesh" is to be cleansed as well as spirit. The passage would have no meaning if σάρξ really denoted mere bodily matter as in itself sinful. To avoid this inference Holsten and Lüdemann reject the passage as spurious.

But without pressing the distinction between σῶμα and σάρξ, as the earlier advocates of the Hellenistic theory do, some recent writers, such as Wernle and Weinel, still hold, not so much on linguistic grounds as for doctrinal reasons, that Paul regarded man as compelled to sin in virtue of the inherent evil of the body. "Sin," says Wernle, "clings to man's bodily nature": "All men are flesh and sin dwells in the flesh. . . . So closely are the body and sin connected that St. Paul creates the expression, 'body of sin.' This theory is neither Jewish nor Greek, but an original creation of the apostle's. . . . Where he goes on to say 'the flesh lusteth against the spirit,' he appears to take flesh as the principle of sin and sensuality just as matter is the seat of evil for the Greeks. Here he is ranging himself on the side of the dualism of the later philosophy which is ultimately derived from Plato." That which prevented Paul, according to Wernle, from going the whole length of the Greeks and regarding the body as essentially evil was "his belief as a Christian that the world and all that is in it—the flesh, therefore, included—belong to God and those that are His, and that it is just the flesh in which the spirit is predestined to dwell."¹

¹ *Anfänge*, vol. i. pp. 231-4.

Wernle assumes that Paul wavers between two theories of the origin of evil—the historical theory which derives it from the fall of Adam, and the philosophical theory which derives it from the inherent sinfulness of the flesh. We are inclined to believe that Paul did not formulate in his own mind any theory of the origin of evil. Of two facts, nevertheless, he was convinced—one was the universality of sin, and the other was that, however it was to be accounted for, evil was not due to our bodily organism. Holtzmann¹ leaves the question as to which of the rival interpretations of Paul is right an open one. Prof. Bruce also admits that “the Pauline anthropology is by no means free from obscurity.” “The Pauline conception of flesh seems to be a ‘tertium quid’—something intermediate between Hellenism and Hebrewism.” It is true there are a few passages which seem to imply the Greek conception that the flesh is inherently evil, and, as the enemy of the soul, is to be mortified. But, on the other hand, it is to be noted that the apostle does not speak of sin as originating in the flesh. It takes up its abode therein as a stranger from without and dwells there as an intruder. Moreover, Paul certainly believes that our Lord possessed a real body and that He was sinless—a belief he could not have held if he had also maintained that the body was wholly evil of itself. Further, he distinctly states that the body can be sanctified and made the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that its members are to be yielded instruments of righteousness. Christians, he says, are “to present their bodies a living sacrifice to God.” Moreover, if human sin were the inevitable outcome of the possession of a body, redemption ought to culminate after death in

¹ *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, vol. ii. pp. 41-46.

deliverance from it instead of its change and restoration. To say that the matter of the body contains the principle of evil, and also to affirm, as the apostle does, that the result of the Redeemer's spirit indwelling in us shall be to quicken our mortal bodies, involves a contradiction with which we should be reluctant to charge the apostle.

Theoretically the body does not necessarily induce a sully of the soul and a surrender to sin. But practically it does so if it be met with no stronger resistance than is offered by man's natural resources. In the fearful conflict which is everywhere being waged on the arena of man's life the flesh inevitably proves the stronger and the mind is worsted. That is no theory, it is the plain narration of facts, account for them as you will. Such is the apostle's own experience and he assumes that it is the story of every man's life. "I see a different law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members."¹ Paul is not theorizing here. He is not working out a philosophical doctrine of the origin of evil. Whether he was acquainted with Greek duality or not, we cannot say. If he seems to agree with Philo, it is not on theoretic grounds but on practical grounds of experience. He states the facts as they present themselves to him. Paul felt what all earnest men have felt—the hindering power of the flesh. The true key to the apostle's view of the body is contained in the autobiographical statement already referred to—"I buffet my body."² He was a man of like passions with ourselves, and he knew by experience those awful temptations of the flesh as

¹ Rom. vii. 23.

² See Bruce, *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p. 263.

the seat of appetite and passion which the holiest of men bear witness to. He is conscious of hindrances to holiness, solicitations to sin, which appear to him to have their seat in the body. This body of death becomes for him therefore the symbol of sin. To it he traces all evil influences, not merely sensual sins but sins of the spirit as well, such as pride, envy, hatred. What wonder if at times it seems to him as if the only chance of life were by mortifying the deeds of the body!

But this experimental view of the body as the instrument of sin is not inconsistent with the other that the flesh in its constitution is not necessarily evil. It is a constituent part of man. The body is to be redeemed, not less than the spirit, and it is to become the instrument of righteousness, the abode of the spirit. Paul is not careful to guard each theory. He does not weigh his language with philosophical nicety. He is not seeking to prove a doctrine. He is writing at white heat on a matter of life or death. Perhaps, as has been suggested by Prof. Bruce,¹ the two theories, if theories they may be called, find their reconciliation when he says, speaking not merely of himself but as spokesman of the race, "I am made of the flesh, sold under sin." On the one hand we seem to get from these words the doctrine that wherever flesh is, sin is—the theory of the inherent evil of matter. On the other hand the words "sold under sin" suggest the other doctrine, that, notwithstanding the universality of sin, its source is not the body. The words imply that the sinful proclivity of man is accidental, a departure from the normal and original state of things, and therefore not irremediable. There is nothing wrong with

¹ See *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p. 275.

the flesh as such. It is God-given. It was made holy. It was meant to serve our higher nature and express our spiritual ends. But a strange foreign power has invaded it. Man has become a slave. He is in bondage to an element that does not belong to his true being. It is not, therefore, the body we are to get quit of, but the evil that has taken up its abode there and is dominating the whole man. Hence the cry, an idle one, if the flesh were itself synonymous with sin, "who shall deliver me"? The answer is that nothing can deliver man, the whole man, body as well as spirit, from this thralldom, but a redeeming transforming power, a new creation.

We are warranted, therefore, in concluding that just as πνεῦμα constitutes the new characteristic of the Christian, the σάρξ must be human nature without the πνεῦμα—the creaturely state of man prior to, and in contrast with, his reception of the divine element whereby he is constituted a new creature.¹ Practically, when applied to the unregenerate, flesh denotes, as Ritschl points out, the whole man—man left to himself, over against God—the natural man conceived as not having yet received the grace of God.² Whenever the apostle speaks of flesh he means man as a creature in his natural state apart from Christ. And the fact that the apostle more than once lays it down as a characteristic of the new life that he who possesses that new life no longer lives to himself, warrants the inference that the root or principle of sin is to be found in man's thus living to himself, in the selfishness

¹Sec Dickson, *Flesh and Spirit*, p. 278.

²This view is taken by several writers. Reuss says, "Flesh comprehends all that belongs to the natural existence." Godet says, "Flesh comprehends human nature in its totality."

which debases his natural life into a self-asserting independence and makes himself the sole object of his thought.¹

III.

It but remains to indicate the significance of the natural powers of soul and body for the ethical life. This may be best done by gathering up the results we have arrived at under several heads.

1. Paul presupposes the *accountability* of man. This is an assumption not of Pauline ethic alone but of all ethic. Unless man is in some sense free to choose and is responsible for his actions, his life has really no ethical value. A science of ethic implies that no individual act is necessitated. We could not treat man as responsible, and still less as culpable, if at any single point he were forced into wrong-doing. Freedom of will in the practical sense in which all men understand it, is a necessary postulate of Christian as of all genuine ethic. This sense of accountability underlies the Gospel's offer of salvation and the call to repentance and faith, and it is the basis, not only in the Pauline epistles but throughout the New Testament, of the moral life and of the final judgment. It is true there are some passages in which the apostle seems to deny human responsibility. The pathos of man's lot lies in the world-wide prevalence of sin and of its dire penalty. Never has the evil of mankind been painted in darker colours, never has its universality been proved more convincingly than in the language of the apostle. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Observation and history alike witness to the

¹Cp. Augustine, *Civ. Dei.* xiv. cap. iii. where he says, "Man assumes an evil character not because he has flesh, but because he lives according to himself."

world-wide range of sin. It is only too evident that Jews and Gentiles are equally under its dominion. "It is written," says the apostle, "there is none righteous, no, not one."

That sin is no accidental phenomenon in human experience, but a necessary consequence of man's nature, is confirmed, it is alleged, by two Pauline lines of argument.

(1) Sin is inherent in the flesh; it is an original part of man's nature, and therefore he cannot be justly held responsible for it. But we have just seen that this is not the view of the apostle. Notwithstanding the high authority of Pfleiderer we must dissent from the statement that Paul identifies sin with flesh or associates evil exclusively with the body or sensuous nature of man. In Romans vii. 17, 18, where he speaks strongly of the power of indwelling sin, he takes care to distinguish it not only from the *ego*, but also from the flesh in which it dwells. So far from sin and flesh being identical, and man being on that account irresponsible, he expressly summons his readers in 2 Cor. vii. 1 to cleanse themselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit. The flesh is not in itself defiling though it needs and admits of cleansing. It is not the flesh which determines the value of man: it is man that determines the value of flesh. The flesh of the lower animal has no ethical worth, it is simply unmoral. That life in the flesh is sinful does not imply that the flesh in itself is sinful. Our vice does not consist in the fact that we are first animals, but that we do not afterwards become men. Our bodies, parts and passions are the stuff out of which we shape and fashion ourselves. Saints and sinners are made by opposite processes out of the same material. It is the mind which gives to human passions and appetites

their ethical significance. And it is just because man is free to use his bodily powers for base or for noble purposes that they may become the vehicles of sensuality or the instruments of virtue. "What makes our heaven that also makes our hell." In short there is nothing evil but spiritual evil; and the world of nature, all natural creation, all material objects, all bodily parts become good or evil as we make them. The whole natural order is but the raw material which exists for the service of a spiritual order. If we are sinners, our flesh becomes the occasion and instrument of our sins. If we are spiritually minded, it becomes the condition and instrument to us of all purity and righteousness. Our body is a true part of us, and it is not by leaving it behind but by taking it up into our higher self that we become spiritual.¹

(2) But it is also alleged that in the passages in which Paul refers to man's participation in Adam's sin, he virtually denies human responsibility. Sin exercises a sovereign dominion to which all are subject through Adam's one act of disobedience.² The interpretation of the passage upon which this statement is founded has been much disputed. Even granted that it means that we actually become sinners by inheritance, and, by reason of the solidarity of the race, do incur in some actual sense the taint of our first father's iniquity, the apostle is only giving expression to the now universally acknowledged fact of heredity, which, while it may be taken as a mitigating element in the final judgment, does not prevent us from attributing to ourselves and to others responsibility for our deeds. It is, however, maintained by many that the passage can only mean that we ourselves have sinned personally as well as

¹ Cp. Du Bose, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 261 ff.

² Rom. v. 12 ff.

Adam, and so have become liable to the same penalty as he. The point of the parallel which the apostle institutes between Adam and Christ is, that as the sin of Adam brought forth not contracted guilt but death upon all, so the obedience of Christ secures not our own virtue but life. That is to say we all, as the children of Adam, inherit the consequences of his guilt, but not the guilt itself. We are born into a world of suffering and death, but whether that world will mean also a world of sin depends not on what Adam did, but upon what we ourselves here and now do, upon the use we make of the life that is given to us.

But apart from these passages there are many others which indubitably affirm both accountability and culpability. In Romans i. 18 the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, and in Romans ii. 6 the apostle writes that "God will render to every man according to his deeds." The whole argument of the first chapter of Romans rests on the assumption that the heathen are guilty, not because they have inherited a burden of sin from their fathers, but because while they had the power to know God, they glorified Him not as God. They sinned not because evil was inherent and inevitable, but because a revelation was given them both in outward creation and in their own inward consciousness, and they deliberately refused the light, turning their natural gifts and privileges into means of degrading lust and idolatry, so that they are without excuse. But the Jews are in no better condition—"Thou that judgest doest the same things." Both therefore, Jews and Gentiles alike, are accountable for their deeds and answerable for the use they have made of their respective revelations. God is no respecter of persons. We have not, indeed, all

received the same endowments and opportunities. But as we have received so we shall be judged. "As many as have sinned without the law shall perish without the law, and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." The standard of verdict in the final judgment is just the moral action of each individual.¹ That, and that alone, according to Paul, will determine the eternal destiny of every man. "For," says the apostle, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Too often in the past has the apostle Paul been presented as the fashioner of an iron system of irresistible might and sovereignty. Men, it has been alleged, are but the puppets of a divine destiny, which, irrespective of their wills, arbitrarily doomed a part of the race to perdition and a part to glory. No more grotesque caricature of his teaching could be conceived. Paul is really the great champion of human freedom, the preacher of individual responsibility. And it is because he is this that he is the teacher whom more than all others the present day needs. Rising out of the profundity of his thought and the subtlety of his language, two highly ethical truths appear—the actuality of personal sin and the accountability of the individual man. Inherent depravity, human inability, the weakness of the flesh—or their modern substitutes, heredity, environment, constitutional frailty—will not avail as excuses. One great fact stands clear and unassailable in the letters of this apostle—the freedom and responsibility of every man before God. Except upon the basis of this fact his preaching of Christ has no value, and

¹ Rom. ii. 6-10.

his offer of the Gospel no meaning. Upon this truth which shines forth on every page of his letters, his whole Christology is built, and his entire ethical teaching is based.

2. There is no real disparagement of the *body* in Paul's epistles; on the contrary, as we have seen, the highest honour is attributed to it. The various physical powers have their uses and functions as necessary parts of the human organism. The later ascetic views which prevailed in the Church were due not to Paul's teaching, but to the influence of the Greek and some of the Latin fathers. If the apostle in some places preaches self-renunciation and abstinence from marriage, it is not, as he expressly says, because marriage is in itself evil, or the flesh impure, but on grounds of expediency and personal safety. He does not even go so far as Christ, who said, "if thine eye offend thee pluck it out, if thy hand offend thee cut it off." Not mutilation but transformation is the constantly recurring thought of the apostle. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice"—make them fit, beautiful and strong as the abode of God's spirit. In the passage in which he refers to marriage, he says to the Corinthians, "use the world as not abusing it." Again he says all things belong to the Christian—the world, life, death, things present and things to come. The body has a high vocation and a glorious destiny. It may be the means of our own spiritual enrichment and of our service towards others. Even here it may be the temple of God, in which the divine spirit may be manifested and glorified, and hereafter it is to be a constituent part of man's immortal life.

3. Paul honours the *intellectual powers* of man. Mr. Lecky, as has been pointed out,¹ brings the serious charge

¹ Jackson, *Expositor*, vol. xi.

against early Christianity that it habitually disregarded the virtues of the intellect. If there be any truth in this statement, and the student of history can scarcely gainsay it, it refers more to the centuries which followed the conversion of Constantine than to the first. No impartial reader of the epistles of Paul can aver that he had made a virtue of ignorance and credulity. These documents, which are the earliest and most authoritative exposition of the mind of Christ, impress us rather with the intellectual boldness of their attempt to grapple with the greatest problems of life and thought. Paul was essentially a thinker. He ranks, says Sabatier, with Plato, Augustine, Calvin, Schleiermacher, Spinoza, Hegel. An imperious necessity compelled him to give his belief full dialectic expression, and to raise it above all contradiction.¹ His mind was of majestic breadth and force. But not only had he from nature this speculative gift; his talent was trained by education. He was not only instructed in the Rabbinical Schools, but, as we have seen, he was probably conversant with the tenets of current Greek philosophy. Nor on becoming a Christian did he cease to value learning. In the solitude of the Arabian desert he thought out the new revelation that had come to him, and prepared himself diligently to give a reason for the faith that was in him. And not only was he a thinker himself, but he sought to make his converts thinkers too. The early Christian churches were not composed merely, as has sometimes been stated, of the poor and illiterate, but had a sprinkling at least of the more highly cultured of the Greeks. But the point is that Paul did not disparage the understanding and did not hesitate to make the utmost demands upon the reasoning powers of the educated and uneducated alike

¹ Sabatier, *Ap. Paul*, p. 89.

among his hearers. He appeals invariably not to the feelings so much as to the mind. Mind and conscience are frequent words in his epistles. Indeed the heart itself, to which he so often addresses himself, is not so much the seat of the emotions as the faculty of the thinking subject. He takes for granted a native capacity in man for apprehending the truth. To him the Gospel is "the word of truth," or simply "the truth." He bids men think on "whatsoever things are true," "to prove all things," "to put on the girdle of truth." He resolutely opposes all forms of fanaticism and seeks to put a restraint upon the wild outbursts of emotion to which semi-civilized oriental populaces were liable. Worship is not to be a superstitious ebullition of feeling, but is to be enlightened and guided by thought. He says, "I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also." "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

It is a strong virile Christianity he proclaims, because he believes there is that in the mind of man which is ready to respond to a thoughtful Gospel. He is anxious, therefore, to present it in its clearness and purity to his fellowmen. It is no magic spell he seeks to exert. He everywhere honours the intellect of man. He claims that he has neither "corrupted the word of God nor handled it deceitfully," and he "commends himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." He bids Timothy "prove himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." If only men will give their unprejudiced minds to it, it will make them wise unto salvation. Hence many of his epistles (especially those of the captivity) contain a

prayer for their readers that they may be led into a fuller understanding of the truth of the Gospel which they have received. If the apostle appears to speak at times disparagingly of wisdom, it is the wisdom of pride, of "knowledge that puffeth up"; and if he warns Timothy against science, it is "the vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called." Paul, in short, exalts the intellect, and bids men attain to the full exercise of all their powers. "Be not children in understanding; but in understanding be men."

4. Paul assumes that there is in man a *latent spirituality* only awaiting the spirit of God to call it forth. Man has been made in God's image, and he bears the divine impress in all the lineaments of his body and soul. He has an affinity for God, and in his very make there is a prophetic element which points to a higher destiny. His degradation cannot wholly obliterate his nobility, and his actual sin bears witness to his possible holiness. The very fact that a man is sold under sin and becomes its slave reveals his capacity for freedom. A beast of burden cannot be a slave in any real sense. A man can be enslaved, because he can be free. Sharply as Paul marks the antithesis between sin and grace, flesh and spirit, identifying the one with man and the other with God, he implies none the less that divine grace and spirit must have a spiritual point of connection with the man who is redeemed by them. Overwhelmed with sinfulness as a man may be, there must be a something in him in common with God which makes redemption a possibility.¹

There is a law written in the heart, and when the heathen do by nature the things contained in the law,

¹ See some suggestive remarks in *The Christian Religion*, by J. S. Lidgett, p. 445.

they witness to their divine origin and destiny. Christian morality is, therefore, nothing else than the morality prepared from all eternity, and is but the highest realization of that which heathen virtue was striving after. In two remarkable passages¹ Paul argues that before the giving of the law was the promise which could not possibly be superseded by the entrance of the law. The main work of the law is to lead up to and prepare the way for the fulfilment of the promise. This Pauline view of the pre-Christian promise implies that there was in the nature of man from the very beginning a potentiality for Christ. As Justin Martyr expresses it: "the Word was in the world before it was in Christ." The truth of the indwelling spirit in humanity before the Word was made flesh, which was early recognized by some of the Greek fathers, and which has become a prominent idea of modern theology, seems to be justified by the whole tone of the Pauline conception of human nature. Within every natural man there is a spiritual man, potential or actual, and in every sinner there is the making of a saint. The man who is unconscious, not merely of the coexistence, but of the conflict of the two selves within him, has not entered upon the reality of human life. For it is this conflict, this choice and decision, presented to every man that gives to life its meaning. There is always the strife between the lower and the higher, the presence of the two men within us, one of which must die for the sake of the other.² In some vital sense the Christ is in every man, and it is the struggle to bring Him to the birth, to manifest Him, that gives to human life its grandeur and solemnity. Everywhere in humanity there is a capacity for Him. Jesus Christ,

¹ Gal. iii. and Rom. iv.

² Cp. Du Bose, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 192.

according to St. Paul, is the end and consummation of the whole creation. In Him is made manifest the hidden wisdom of God, foreordained before the world unto our glory. Christ is the God-appointed heir of all things. The divine idea of a creation from eternity is the idea of a creation which is to be consummated in and through the Son of Man. "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."¹ The world, as a moral work, is to be regarded as made for the Redeemer, and as having its fulfilment in Him. In 1 Cor. xv. 47 Paul suggests that God's idea of a moral creation is not finished in Adam, but in the second man, who is of heaven. The ascent of life, as it is now recognized by science, from the rudest material beginnings up to the spiritual nature of man, involves the presence and potentiality from the very earliest of the Christ-germ. Christ brings to perfect fruition the capacities of a higher spiritual life which lie in all men.

All creation is indeed prophetic. "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."² Creation is a book of prophecy containing foreshadowings of future glory. The prophetic element is specially discernible in man. "Man awakens for himself," says Nietzsche, "an interest, a response, a hope, almost a confidence, that something important is about to happen, that something is in preparation." On the one hand he is but a part of the world of nature, but on the other, he is the vehicle of something above nature. He is the partaker of the divine essence, the sharer of the life of God. Man's history is a spiritual drama, the unfolding of which becomes gradually more wondrous, and from whose past and present a mystic finger points towards something greater yet to come. Paul's argument

¹ Col. ii. 17.

² Rom. viii. 19.

seems to be that Christ, by taking human form and manifesting Himself in our midst, awakens the sleeping ideals of our souls and kindles there dormant yearnings for Sonship to which our very creation bears witness.

“Were not the eye itself a sun
No sun for it could ever shine,
By nothing Godlike could the heart be won
Were not the heart itself divine.”¹

Man is not simply what he now is, but all he is yet to be. Paul compels us from the very beginning to an attitude of expectancy. With all the seeming pessimism which Wernle ascribes to the apostle in his description of man's history, there is far more of optimism. He sees man in the light of his future. Christ is the consummation to which his whole being points. A race that includes a Christ and needs a Christ for its explanation and fulfilment need not despair. As Schleiermacher says, “Christ's work is the completion of the creation of human nature, for which all that went before was a preparation.” On every side man's life witnesses to its supernatural origin and eternal destiny. The natural enfolds the spiritual—the human has within it the potency and promise of the divine. Body, soul, spirit, mind, heart, conscience, attest a life that transcends the finite and bears the signature of Him in whose image man has been created.

¹ Göthe, *Zenien*.

PART II
IDEALS AND PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER IV

THE ETHICAL IDEAL OF ST. PAUL

THE subject of our last chapter prepares us for the theme which must now engage our attention. For psychology is the presupposition of ethic. Man's capacities involve his ideals. What he is indicates what he ought to be. This is the element of truth in the dictum of Kant as expressed by Schiller—"Thou canst therefore thou oughtest." Paul painted the moral degradation of the Gentiles in the darkest colours; and we have sufficient evidence that the reality was not less black than the picture. Paganism, like Christianity, must be judged by its performances as well as by its ideals. And Paul is justified of the historians. Yet his breadth of view appears in the fact that he has not lost hope even of those who answer to the terrible indictment of the first chapter in his letter to the Romans. He appeals to the reason and conscience of the natural man. Even if they are without any knowledge of the Old Testament, the heathen have the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts meanwhile excusing or accusing one another. Paul even goes so far as to acknowledge that by some in darkest heathendom the law was not only known but kept. This recognition of the divine in man involves some potency and promise

of spiritual attainment. And so we are led inevitably to the question—what, in the light of this view of the natural man, and of the facts and forces of Christianity, is Paul's conception of the moral ideal, the ultimate aim and end of human life, what is for Paul the highest good? This is, and has always been, for moralists the prime enquiry. Man being what he is, endowed with capacities of body and soul which point to something above and beyond his present attainment, must there not be some supreme goal or ideal for which he is fitted, and which, if he is to fulfil his being's end and aim, he must in some measure realize? "The moral lawgiver," says Newman Smyth, "is always the man who has some pattern shown him on the Holy Mount."¹ Wherever morality is a living power, it reveals itself in consciousness in the form of some vision of the ideal seeking incarnation in man. Whatever may be our theory as to the nature of the ultimate good, it is always a good to be made real, an ideal which demands fulfilment in the actual, a word to be made flesh. Aristotle² began his ethics by accepting the definition of the good as that at which all things aim, and he remarked that "knowledge of this end must have a great influence on the whole conduct of life. Like archers shall we not be likely to attain that which is right, if we have a mark?" Life divorced from an ideal is ethically of no value. Man without vision or sense of a higher purpose is undistinguishable from the brute creation.

"Unless above himself he can
Exalt himself, how poor a thing is man."³

Some conception of the supreme good is the imperative demand and moral necessity of man's being. Hence

¹ *Christian Ethics*, p. 49.

² *Nic. Ethics*, 1. 2. 2.

³ Vaughan.

the chief business of ethics is to answer the question: what is that supreme good? For what should a man live? What is that largest and best to which all men's powers should be devoted? What, in short, is the ideal of life? It would have been indeed strange if Paul, in common with all the great moralists of ancient and modern times, had not conceived at the outset some definite end or ideal of life. That he did so is everywhere evident in his writings. The most superficial reader of his epistles cannot fail to perceive that at the living heart of all his expositions of truth, of all his appeals to communities and individuals, lay a high conception of the meaning and worth of life, an exalted idea of the duty of man.

What is the ruling conception? What are the *nature*, *contents* and leading *characteristics* of the moral ideal of St. Paul?

I.

And first as to the *nature* of Paul's ideal. Here we must find a starting-point in his own personal history. For we are never allowed to forget that Paul's ethics, like his theology, was the interpretation of his own experience. All has been fused in the fires of his own glowing heart, and shaped in the mould of his own personal needs. Even in his pre-Christian days, before he received the heavenly vision, his was a nature of intense moral earnestness. There was no frivolity or indifference, either in his mental occupations or outward manner of conduct. Even from the earliest he had his ideal. He did not pursue a life of ease or pleasure. Rightly or wrongly, he had a distinct view of man's purpose, and his days were spent in the most assiduous devotion to it. The aim of Paul was the aim of every

pious Jew—to obey God and by laborious effort to fulfil the law of righteousness as enjoined in the Hebrew Scriptures. We have nothing to do here with the misgivings which may have troubled him as to whether he could actually achieve the Pharasaic aim of life. His very disquietude made him probably more diligent in his endeavours. While he despaired of his ability, he never wavered in his belief that the law itself was holy, righteous and good. On his conversion, Paul's ideal did not change essentially. It still consisted in the fulfilment of divine righteousness. Life for him always meant life in relation to God. God was to him the beginning and end of existence. What Novalis said of Spinoza might be said of the apostle: "He was a God-intoxicated man." It was so before his conversion, it was even more so after it. For God has now for him a richer meaning and life's ideal is filled with a new content. A new power has taken possession of him and his whole outlook is enlarged. The revelation of the risen Christ which he received on the way to Damascus becomes henceforth the authority and inspiration of his life. His first question is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and from that moment, as he himself said, "he was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." God is still supreme: but God the stern lawgiver is brought near in Christ and His will is interpreted through the life of His Son.

A careful study of the epistles discloses three main elements in the Pauline ideal. Man's highest good consists generally in doing God's will and more particularly in the attainment of likeness to Christ and the realization of human brotherhood. The ethical ideal is threefold—holiness, Christlikeness, brotherhood—a relation to God, to Christ, to man. The first is the

pure white light of the ideal: the second is the ideal realized in the one perfect life which is viewed as standard or norm: the third is the progressive realization of the ideal in the life of humanity which is the sphere of the new life and becomes a holy brotherhood by its means.

1. *Holiness* as the fulfilment of the *divine will*. For Paul man's chief end is to glorify God. Man is made for God, and only in the service of God does he find the clue to the meaning of his own life and the gift of inward rest. "In God's will is our peace." If you ask what then is the will of God, Paul answers without any hesitation: God wills man to be, holy, righteous, perfect. "Be ye holy, for I am holy," is the note of the Old Testament ideal. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," is the requirement of Christ. Though Paul does not actually employ this language, the whole tenor of his teaching is in harmony with this aim.¹ If we examine one or two passages of the principal epistles we shall see that this requirement of divine holiness lies at the very basis of his ethical ideal for man.

In 1 Thessalonians he reminds his converts of the aim of his missionary labours amongst them, telling them that his preaching of the Gospel of God looks towards the realization of the end of their Christian calling, "that ye might *walk worthy of God* who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory."² And his general exhortation closes with the prayer that "the Lord may make them increase and abound in love towards one another and towards all men, even as we do towards you, to the end

¹ Though he does say to the Corinthians (2 Cor. xiii. 9, 11): "This also we wish, even your *perfection*." "Be *perfect*."

² Thess. ii. 12.

he may establish your hearts *unblameable in holiness before God* our Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." So the felt nearness of the Parousia only intensifies the need for blameless purity. Already in this the earliest of the epistles, the doctrinal part is but the basis of the ethical superstructure, and the more important passages are concerned with moral precepts which flow directly from the ideal of life he has just enunciated, "We exhort you by the Lord Jesus . . . how ye ought to *walk and please God*, for this is the *will of God* even your *sanctification*."

In the epistle to the Galatians where he lays the foundations of the Christian life, not in the works of the law but in justification by faith, he bids his converts "stand fast" in their new found liberty that they may realize their high calling. "For we through the spirit wait for the *hope of righteousness*."¹ In a similar spirit he writes to the Corinthians, "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but the *keeping of the commandments of God*."² And in the second epistle to the same body of Christians, a perfected holiness motivated by godly fear is exhibited as the end and goal of all Christian living. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness* in the fear of God."

It is the same aim of life which is presented throughout the epistle to the Romans. In the sixth chapter the apostle draws the conclusion that those who are justified by faith and therefore belong to the kingdom of grace, must live no longer under the dominion of sin but *unto holiness*: they must no more yield their members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin but *yield themselves unto God* as those that are alive from the dead, and

¹ Gal. v. 1-6.

² 1 Cor. vii. 19.

their members as instruments of righteousness unto God.¹ In the twelfth chapter where begins that magnificent description of practical Christian living in which the mighty and massive foundations of doctrine have been really laid as by a wise master-builder, the apostle urges the Christians of Rome "to present their bodies a living, holy and acceptable sacrifice unto God, not conforming their lives to the fashion of this world, but transforming them by the renewal of their moral nature that they *may realize the good and perfect will of God.*" Finally, to cite no other illustrations, in the two epistles sent from Rome, which were probably circular letters for the use of the various Christian communities—the one immediately addressed to the old and well-tried church of Philippi, the other to the more recently founded church at Colosse—the apostle, after expressing his gratitude for the religious condition of the two communities, proceeds, in the former, to utter the prayer that their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, and that they may be *sincere and without offence* till the day of Christ; that they may be filled with the *fruits of righteousness.*² To the Colossians his words are almost identical, "that ye may be filled with all knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might *walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."³ In this same epistle he proceeds to lay down the minutest regulations as to family and social life as befitted the unsettled condition of a new community like that to which he was writing, and sums up his exhortations in the general principle—as the all-embracing end of life—

¹ Rom. vi. 1-13.

² Phil. i. 9, 10.

³ Col. i. 9, 10.

“whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, for ye serve the Lord Jesus.” In addressing, on the other hand, the old established congregation of Philippi, he does not dwell so particularly upon the details of the moral life, but concludes with words which present the ideal of manhood in its noblest form: “finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely and of good report, if there be anything that is virtuous, if there be anything that is worthy of praise, think on these things.”¹

It will be seen from these passages and others that might be quoted that blameless character, righteous conduct, holiness of life, are still the essential elements in Paul’s ideal of goodness; and not less under the Gospel than as formerly under the law, obedience to God is insisted on as the supreme standard and goal of endeavour. To walk worthy of God, to fulfil His will in all sincerity and purity, is for the Christian as for the Jew the end of morality. Paul foresaw that it might be objected to the new life that, because it rested upon a supernatural basis and sprung from an unseen divine root, men might imagine that the old requirements were annulled; and that if they were in Christ and justified by faith, the old aims of righteousness and holiness and the common virtues of justice and truth were no longer elements in the ideal of man. He sets himself to controvert this idea as emphatically as Christ Himself. He too would have said, “except your righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of Heaven.”² There are those, says the apostle, “who being ignorant of God’s

¹ Phil. iv. 8.

² Matt. v. 20.

righteousness go about seeking to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God." Christ is indeed the end of the law of righteousness to everyone that believeth; but righteousness one way or other must be fulfilled as God's highest ideal for man.¹

Life had a supreme worth and sacredness for Paul because God was its end. To be a man was to fulfil in his own person God's idea of humanity. That is why man is here at all. That is his whole work and destiny. If you had asked an ancient, what is the highest good or chief end of man? he would probably have answered "happiness." If you had asked Paul, he would have emphatically replied, "to do God's will." Doing God's will may eventually bring happiness; indeed, because it is God's will, and is therefore the highest and the best we know, it involves man's supreme blessedness. But before every man, just because he is man, with the touch of the divine hand on him, and his maker's end to serve, lies this ultimate goal of existence—the realization of the perfect life according to the idea of God. Not self-regarding happiness but God-regarding righteousness is the Christian end. Paul strikes this strenuous note, the key-note of the true ethical conception of life for serious men in a serious world, in his great declaration that in the Gospel is revealed the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*—the Rightness of God. Rightness is more than righteousness. And it is this positive and searching demand, and not mere absence of imperfection or sin, which the apostle exhibits as the goal of man. Rightness is God's holiness, and this in its fulness is man's ultimate aim, the harmony of all conflicting elements, the at-one-ment of all contrasts, the complete realization of His divine humanity. So

¹ Rom. x. 1-4.

does Paul's Gospel aim at "presenting every man perfect before God."

2. *Christlikeness.* The second element in Paul's ideal is not something different from the first. It is a more concrete way of presenting the same truth. If holiness, Godlikeness is the *end*, Christlikeness is the *norm* or standard in which that end is presented to man in the Gospel. In Christianity God is revealed to us through Jesus Christ, and the abstract impersonal ideas of holiness and righteousness are transmuted into the features of a living personality, whose spirit is to be embodied and reproduced in men's lives. Christianity takes the old aims of life and puts a new spirit into them, breathes into them a living soul. Hence in the Gospel there is presented by Paul a new type of virtue, which wholly distinguishes his ethic from that of the ancient world, both as offered by the Jewish religion and by the philosophy of the Greeks. Whatever view theologians may take of the historicity of the Christ of the Gospels, and especially of the incident on the road to Damascus—that wondrous unveiling of the Lord of heaven to the soul of His future disciple—no one can fail to recognize the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the ideal which this man sets before the world. It is not transcendental and abstract, it is immanent and personal, a life and not a laborious effort. The Christian is a new man. Christ is born in him, and his whole after-life is but the explanation of that fact, an unfolding of the divine seed implanted in the soul. Christ has now for Paul, as Ritschl would say, the value of God. All man is and all he owes to God, he is and owes, the apostle would tell us, equally to Christ.

In three different ways Paul presents Christ as ideal. He is at once Pattern, Power and Principle.

(1) Christ is for Paul the one perfect human, the one Son of man in whom the fulness of manhood has been realized,

“The first to insist on
The natural sovereignty of our race.”

As such He is the *Pattern* of goodness which is to be reproduced in human lives. It is characteristic of the New Testament writers that they do not content themselves with imaginative descriptions of goodness, but present a living ideal in the person of Jesus Christ. The value of concrete example is indeed to some extent recognized in non-Christian systems. In the “philosophic king” of Plato, the “expert” of Aristotle, the “wise man” of the Stoics, we have an imaginary embodiment of the ideal. A similar tendency is apparent in modern systems, as for example, in Utilitarianism and Comtism. “The complexity of the ethical end is so great,” says Mill, “that it can often be best represented by a concrete example.”¹ And Comte, “after denouncing the anthropomorphism of other religions, ends with the adoration of actual men and women.”² But what other systems have only conceived in an imaginative form, Christianity has realized in an actual Person. “It is part of the profound adaptation of Christianity to the actual needs of mankind that it does not define the moral ideal, but manifests the very thing itself. It proclaims Christ, not only as a revelation of God but as a supreme type of character, as the typical and representative embodiment of the kingdom of God.”³

When, therefore, Paul exhibits the new type of character according to which the souls of his converts

¹ Mill, *Utilitarianism*, p. 15.

² Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, i. p. 432.

³ Ottley, *Christian Ideas and Ideals*, p. 139.

are to be fashioned, it is the actual life of Christ he holds up. When he seeks to bend the proud and stubborn wills of the Philippians, he appeals to the humility and self-denial of Jesus, and bids them imitate His spirit. When he inculcates patience under suffering and wrong, his restraining motive is the example of our Lord. When he enjoins the duty of liberality, he reminds the Corinthians of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich became poor. And when he would commend love to them, as greater, grander, more abiding than eloquence, knowledge, power or courage, he simply presents some of the features of the life of Christ as he lived among men.¹ "Be ye followers of God," he says to the Ephesians, "and walk in love as Christ hath loved us"; and to the Philippians, commending unselfishness and lowliness of mind, he writes, "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." When he exhorts the Colossians to forgiveness and long-suffering, he quotes the example of Christ—"even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." The Christlike man is he who is striving to conform his life to the image of his Master, and to reproduce in his character the features of the man Christ Jesus. St. Paul does not dwell, indeed, frequently upon the details of Christ's earthly life, but there can be no doubt that though he recognized the uniqueness of His moral relationship to God, he also saw in Him one who was made in the likeness of man, and who was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin. His life was, in a real sense, normal in its general conditions, passing through the ordinary stages of growth and participating in the common experiences of man. There was the same call in His case as ours to prayer, to patience, and to

¹ 1 Cor. xiii.

endurance. There was the same demand for moral decision and renunciation. His human nature was made perfect by submission to the ordinary laws of spiritual development. Hence for Paul He was the embodiment of God's righteous will, the supreme example of holiness, the highest pattern of human character, and to be a disciple of Christ was to be one who sought to obey Him, to follow, to imitate Him, and to carry His mind and spirit into all the complex tasks and trials of actual life.¹

(2) But to say that Paul presents Christ as example and nothing more would be a most inadequate and misleading account of the apostle's view of the ideal life, and of the relation in which he believes Christ to stand to the human race. Christ is example, but He is more, He is also *Power*. He is the motive and inspiration of the new life. Not example only, but cause of life to all who believe.² Mere mechanical imitation of Jesus or literal reproduction of His image is not what Paul enjoins. He says not, "be like Christ," but "have the mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Indeed, as has been well said,³ the literal imitation of examples has but a limited reign and inevitably passes into something higher. All imitation is something of a discovery. It is not the mechanical work of a copyist. The world of motives begins to be revealed. Imitation deepens. It does not stop at actions overt and visible. It strives to reproduce what it divines to be the spirit in which the imitated acts are done. The very nature of goodness forbids slavish reproduction. Every look, word and gesture of the good

¹ Ottley, *Christian Ideas and Ideals*, p. 143.

² Eph. i. 19-20.

³ MacCunn, *The Making of Character*, p. 137.

man, so far from being copied merely, are the direct living expression of the moral spirit within. We can never hope to interpret the character of another truly unless there be within our own breasts that same moral spirit from which we believe the interpreted word or action to proceed. Hence there is a certain justification in Kant's sweeping assertion, that "imitation finds no place at all in morality. . . . Even the Holy One of the Gospels must first be compared with an ideal of moral perfection before we can recognize Him as such."¹ Much as example may do for us, it cannot implant the moral spirit nor create the capacity of spiritual response without which there can be no real appropriation of moral qualities. If that be partially true of ordinary examples, it is truer still of the example of Christ. Indeed, there is a sense in which Christ is not even our example unless He is more. The question "What would Jesus do?" as the test of conduct may cover a quite inadequate conception of the intimate and vital relation Christ bears to our humanity. Even in the *Imitatio Christi*, with all its beautiful and exalted spirit, one is conscious of a false note at times, as if the new life were a thing of routine and outward copying, and not an indwelling spirit. There are aspects of Christ's personality and work, and these the most unique and distinctive, which are not, and were never meant to be, the object of human imitation. As Lord and Redeemer, Christ offers no pattern for us. "It is not to copy after Him," says a modern writer, "but to let His life take form in us, to receive His spirit and make it effective—which is the moral task of the Christian." It is not as the example of the new life, but as its motive and creative power that Paul most frequently

¹ *Metaphysics of Ethics*, sect. ii.

presents Christ. "Let the love of Christ constrain you." "Let Christ be born in you." "Christ in you the hope of glory." Just here the grandeur and originality of Paul's ideal appears. There is nothing of this in ancient ethics. What the moralists of Greece sought for in vain, Christ achieved for our humanity by His life-work—the creative impulse of personal love and vital contact with a divine power of renewal. We love Christ, but we also live by Him. We could not even imitate Him if He were not already within us.

(3) And so we are led by a natural and inevitable transition to consider Christ not simply as pattern and power, but also as *Principle* of the new life—the higher and diviner self of every man. The Christ-life is one with the idea of the good. The kingdom of God as the perfected human ideal is inseparably bound up with Christ. He is king of a new realm, head of a new creation. "He is our life," says Paul. United in vital relation to Him we belong to another world and a higher order. *In* this world, the Christian is not *of* it. Participating in the life of Christ he is a citizen of heaven, a sharer of the unseen and eternal. "Being risen with Christ, seek," says Paul, "those things which are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God." The Christian is to feel the mystic drawing of the unseen, to walk in the new life with Christ. Paul is never tired of telling us that this is the principle of his own life. "For me to live is Christ"; "to win Christ," to be found in Him, is life's supreme end. Christ is all in all. To know Christ is eternal life. To serve Christ is perfect freedom. It is no bygone memory or buried hero of the past that Paul holds up before us. All that is highest and best in manhood is centred in and achieved through the living Christ. He is the risen and regnant

Lord—living and active now. To attain to personal union with Christ, to share the fellowship of His spirit now, to have implanted within us a living seed which will unfold to perfect fulness hereafter, that is for Paul the Christian ideal, God's best for man, "the last of life for which the first was made."¹

3. The *Brotherhood and Unity of Man*. Up to this point, in our consideration of the ideal of Paul, the emphasis has seemed to lie on the perfection of the individual. But none knew better than Paul that the individual is not perfected alone. Paul's aim may be individual, but it is not individualistic. He may endeavour to present every man perfect before God, but he well knows that no man can find himself until he finds his duties, and that the single soul is completed in the brotherhood of the race.

Two things especially, according to Mr. Lecky, the world owes to Jesus Christ—the new sacredness of life and the new sense of brotherhood. These two ideas find repeated expression in the epistles. The one is a consequence of the other. To those who came under the power of the Gospel life appeared to be of quite infinite worth, for the Cross of Christ had supplied a new and an unique standard of value; and in addition the actual character of Jesus had set before men an altogether new ideal of humanity. If we compare the teaching of Paul with the teachings of contemporary writers, we find ourselves at once confronted with an entirely different order of values. It is no longer the man as citizen, ruler or philosopher; no more the noble or the slave as such that comes before us; but man as created in the image of God, man as redeemed by the blood of Christ, and,

¹ See Du Bose, *Gospel According to Paul*, p. 296, who works out the three senses in which Christ is ours in a somewhat different manner.

therefore, both to himself and to others, of transcendent potential worth and dignity. Nor is there any longer a distinction between man and man. God has made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth. He has sent His Son to die for all men, and by His word and spirit He is calling all into a common fellowship in which there is neither Greek nor Jew, bond nor free, male nor female, but in which all are one in Christ Jesus.¹

Many of the precepts of the apostle refer, not to single individuals, but to humanity as an organic whole. Paul recognizes that no man can live to himself alone, and that in seeking his own good he ought to seek his brother's good as well. Christians can only fulfil the law of Christ as they bear one another's burdens. One of the first steps which the apostle took was to gather the disciples together into organized communities. He recognized that no Christian could have fought his way through the dark night of idolatry and immorality which surrounded him as an isolated unit. The congregation, or the Church, as Paul calls it, was a necessary condition for all permanent religious life. These organizations were probably first modelled partly upon the Greek and partly upon the Jewish pattern. But however they originated, such communities of brethren, closely knit together for religious and social purposes, gave to the individual members a sense of strength and comfort, and often stood to them in the place of the family.² To these congregations Paul's chief epistles were written, and, though the aim of his preaching was in the first instance the conversion of the individual, he conceived the power of the new life to be centred in the Church.

¹ Cp. Fordyce, *The New Social Order*, p. 39.

² Wernle, *Beginning of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 190.

The Church was Christ's body, of which individuals were the members, necessary to one another, and deriving their strength and nutriment from Christ, the head. The daily needs of the congregations forced the apostle to elaborate a kind of sociology. Though perhaps Paul can scarcely be styled a social reformer in the modern sense of the phrase, and though his first thoughts are for the Church of God, the body of Christ, it must not be forgotten that the whole of humanity is for him the aim of final redemption, and the field is the world. It is surely a mistake to say, as Weinell does, "that Paul's teaching is altogether cut off from national life; his ethical system is that of anarchism without and of a conventicle within, . . . it does not move along with the full stream of a broad life in touch with the world at every point, nor has it to do with people who either could or would acquire any influence in the shaping of society or the state."¹ It is true "that the vices and virtues with which he is concerned" are in the first instance those of a little circle of believers, but they are the vices and virtues which for the most part have to do with men and women of all conditions and all times. Many of his precepts may be particular; but the principles from which they are deduced are universal and applicable to all men. Temporary and local as some of the questions may be which Paul discusses, there is nothing trivial in his treatment of them. The matter of eating meat offered to idols has no practical interest for us now, but his large-heartedness and moral earnestness, his resolute appeal to the loftiest principles, lifts the subject out of its immediate connection, and makes it an object-lesson for all times in the delicate task of adjusting the rival claims of Christian liberty and expediency.² Indeed Paul,

¹ Weinell, *St. Paul*, p. 334.

² Jackson, *Expos.*, vol. xi. p. 149.

as Harnack says, "dominates all earthly things and circumstances like a king."¹ Instead of "provincial edicts" he issues "imperial laws," which are applicable to the whole moral world. He is the apostle of emancipation and liberty, fighting as the conscript of posterity the battle of spiritual freedom. His Gospel is social as well as individual. His goal is the brotherhood of man. He proclaims the unity and equality before God of Greek and Roman, of barbarian and civilized, of bond and free, and yet it is a significant fact that the spirit of national independence has nowhere been so strong as in those nations which have received most plainly the impress of his powerful mind. It is not too much to say that many of the great political and social questions which are so full of significance for modern times, though not directly referred to by Paul, are to be solved only in the light and by the application of the great broad principles of equity and justice, of Christian charity and forbearance, of brotherhood and unity which he lays down. It is impossible to interpret the splendid ideal which the apostle holds up before the gaze of the Ephesian Church in any limited or local sense. It is nothing if not a prayer and prophecy for the whole complex and manifold life of humanity—"till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."²

II.

So far, we have considered in a general way the nature and contents of Paul's ethical ideal. It may be well for the sake of greater definiteness and clearness to specify certain important *characteristics* which cannot fail to strike the reader of the epistles.

¹ *What is Christianity?* p. 17.

² Eph. iv. 13.

1. The *absoluteness* of Paul's ideal may first be noted. Nothing higher or more commanding is conceivable. It is like the ideal of Jesus Himself, absolute. God "hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."¹ Our walk is to be worthy of God. Our thoughts and actions are to be measured only by the highest standard and authority known to us—the commandments of God, which are to be read in the light of Christ—God's image and the Revealer of His character and will.² What Kant sought to secure for morality by his "categorical imperative," Paul found in the living imperative of the Spirit of Christ. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His."³ The Christian law is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."⁴

Paul never forgets that he is the envoy of Jesus to the nations. Never once does he lower his ideal or mitigate his supreme demands. Everywhere the power of the world was opposing and thwarting his work. One has but to think of the condition of life in such cities as Corinth, Ephesus and Rome to realize the greatness of the apostle's task. Expressions like these—"be not conformed to the world," "set your minds on things which are above," "our citizenship is in heaven"—show how high the apostle bore among the nations the flag of the Gospel's absolute and imperative demands. To break with his heathen surroundings was the Christian's first and foremost duty. With colossal courage Paul drove straight against the mighty mass of heathen idolatry and vice. He will listen to no terms with evil. He will make no compromise with expediency. In every crisis he adheres firmly to his principles. As against the Judaizing party

¹ Eph. i. 4.

³ Rom. viii. 9.

² 2 Cor. iv. 6.

⁴ Rom. viii. 2.

he proclaims the liberty with which Christ has set us free. As against the Ascetics of Rome, who imagined themselves compelled by religious scruples to abstain from meat and wine, he champions the "strong" brethren.¹ The success of his missionary work was threatened by two great enemies, the gross vices and the fanatical tendencies of his heathen converts. The vicious life, so often continued after conversion, seemed to demand that certain allowances should be made for the natural weaknesses of men. On the other hand, the foolish zeal and ascetic practices of others, which sought to reduce the Christian life to sloth and self-pleasing, tended to loosen all discipline and control. With the uncompromising firmness which belongs only to the greatest, Paul meets each case as it presents itself. He excommunicates the immoral member of the Corinthian Church. He recognizes no inferior form of Christianity. He proclaims the inviolability of the Christian ideal. Circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing, but a new creature. The sacrifice that is well-pleasing to God is not any outward form of worship or external rite, but the devotion of body and soul to His service.

2. A second characteristic of Paul's ideal is its *inwardness*. The standard of righteousness is the law of the spirit within the heart. The Christian character is attained, not by any servile act of obedience to an external authority, but by the free, glad and boundless fulfilment of love. A new and living power within renews and transforms the whole man, so that what he formerly strove to do by painful effort he now accomplishes spontaneously and from the heart. "Love takes the barrier at a leap." Instead of the ineffectual labor-

¹ See Wernle, *Beginnings*, vol. i. p. 216.

iousness of "works," there grow up in his heart the fruits of the spirit. The old legality of the Jew is transformed into the living morality of the Christian. Man is no more governed by "thou shalt," but by "I will." From the heart of Christ's "new man" morality grows and expands naturally, like the flower from the bud, the fruit from the seed.

It was from his own experience that Paul discovered the inwardness of the ideal. He found that that morality in its truest sense "can only blossom in the fiery heat of religious enthusiasm." Try as he would, he found that as a Pharisee he could not perform the works of the law, although all that it bade him do was righteous, holy and good. For moral compulsion does not suffice. The mere categorical imperative, absolute though it be, is cold, impassive and hard. It only condemns more hopelessly than ever. A new element is needed, a power of inward renewal and transformation. Duty and desire must become one. Faith must supplant outward requirement, and the ideal be transmuted from an abstract law into the free and glowing life of love.

As a natural consequence of the inwardness of the ideal, morality in Paul's view cannot any longer consist in the performance of a number of isolated precepts, nor can the ideal be presented in the form of outward commandments. It is a principle, a spirit which must direct and control from within the whole life. A man is not moral by literally performing this or that duty, but only as he gets behind all duties, and is true to the inner law of the heart. All the commandments are but integral parts of one ideal. It is not enough, as Jesus taught, not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery. These laws are but the outward expressions of an inward principle of purity. "Commandments are but special

instances.”¹ Morality is not a mechanical conformity to an external code, but the personal decision which each man once for all makes for himself. What Paul therefore aimed at was not a system of laws, but a new moral sense, which everyone must apply to his own conduct. He was compelled, indeed, in practice to descend to the minutest details, and he has given us in his epistles a wealth of single precepts. But we must remember the class of converts to whom he was writing, and the circumstances amid which they were placed. They were for the most part Gentiles, but recently emerged from Heathenism, and they were still in the midst of a hostile world, exposed to the temptations and perils of corrupt pagan cities. It was impossible merely to tell such people to be faithful to the Gospel. The law had been, after all, a necessary stage in the religious evolution of the Hebrew, “his schoolmaster to bring him to Christ,” and Paul, quick to grasp the significance of this divine leading in history, saw the necessity of legislating in the details of morality if his converts were to attain in the end to the true inwardness of Christian obligation. But whatever the subject he is discussing, the point to be noted is the skill and exquisite art with which he deduces all his isolated precepts from one great fundamental principle. Thus in Romans xii. we find a whole series of ethical injunctions, but they are all grouped under one all-embracing appeal of reasonable service in conformity with the perfect will of God. And in the next chapter, alluding to Jesus’ teaching with regard to the commandments, he sums up the whole in one immortal phrase, “Love is the fulfilling of the law.”

3. A third characteristic calls for mention, viz. the

¹See Weinel.

symmetry and proportion of the Pauline ideal.¹ The apostle is no faddist. He does not harp upon one form of excellence to the exclusion of all others; or denounce one particular sin while making light of others. He had a wonderfully sane mind and well-balanced judgment, and if he dwells more upon one virtue at one time, or on occasion emphasizes some particular vice, it is only because the circumstances of those whom he addresses demand this special treatment. Aristotle taught that virtue lay in the mean between two extremes. And it is true that the exaggeration of a virtue may easily become a vice. There is a "pride which apes humility," and a lowliness which is only the miserable counterfeit of the first beatitude. Kindness may become weak amiability, and thrift may pass over into penuriousness. Few men present a well-rounded character, "mind and soul according well." Most of us have our idiosyncrasies and partialities, and even the best men are apt to accentuate some particular type of goodness to the neglect, if not the disparagement of other forms of excellence for which they have little affinity. None of His disciples attains to the beautiful proportion and many-sided perfection of the Great Master's life. Jesus united the tenderness of womanhood with the strength of manhood. He combined justice and mercy, meekness and courage, self-sacrifice and authority. It might easily be shown that Paul's vehement temperament was never completely subdued by his ideal. He may not always have done justice to his opponents in controversy, and he may have been at times over-masterful and impatient of interference. But when all is said, as even writers like Renan, Wernle, Weinel,

¹ This characteristic has been excellently worked out by Mr. Jackson in *Expositor*, vol. xi., to whom we are indebted for some thoughts which follow.

Bousset and Wrede, who have been most diligent in pointing out his deficiencies, have been also ready to acknowledge there was in Paul's character and attitude to his correspondents, as exhibited in his epistles, a fine combination of heroic energy, ardent vehemence and glowing passion on the one side, and of wonderful tenderness, delicacy of feeling, and appreciative sympathy on the other. It takes a great man to be gentle, and only a truly forceful nature can be pitiful. This strong man is not ashamed of tears,¹ and, if he had the Stoic's fortitude, he had nothing of his unruffled apathy. Of him more than most men are Schiller's words true: "Religion of the cross! Thou alone dost interweave the twin strands of humility and strength."

The balance and proportion of the ideal which Paul presented may be the better appreciated if we glance at one or two particulars.

(1) It has been justly pointed out by Mr. Lecky and others that whereas antiquity extolled the masculine virtues and disparaged the gentler, it is the distinctive glory of Christianity that it has put a special honour on meekness, humility, forgiveness. Not only in the teaching of Jesus but in that of Paul as well, what have been called the amiable virtues are pre-eminent. "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, generosity, trustfulness, gentleness, self-control." But we must not assume that because our Lord and His apostles accentuated the gentler type of morality, they ignored the more active and masculine virtues. Justice is not incompatible with love, nor is meekness opposed to courage. "No man," says Diderot, "is great without passion." But he ought to have added that not

¹ See a fine discourse on "Ses Larmes" in Monod's *Cinq Discours* on St. Paul.

in his passion but in the control and guidance of passion does his true greatness lie. It must be remembered that there was less need on Paul's part to advocate the bold assertive qualities of character. The age in which he lived was a militant age, and the people to whom he wrote belonged largely to countries which had been taught to believe that "might is right." The proud Roman, the self-sufficient Greek, the self-righteous Hebrew needed to be reminded rather of those aspects of character which their training would lead them to despise. Jesus and His apostles, therefore, put the moral emphasis of the Gospel on those obligations which human self-seeking is prone to pass over. Neither Paul's life nor his teaching was deficient in the militant virtues.¹ But it was eminently true of him what Lessing has remarked of great souls: "we speak least of those virtues which are our truest possession." When, however, occasions arose—and they were not few in those "first Christian days"—for Christ's disciples to put their courage to the front, they did not lack a leader or a battle-cry. Something of "the stern joy which warriors feel" rings at such times in the words of the great apostle. "Quit you like men," he cries, "be strong." Note the calm strength, the quiet assurance of his message to the Philippian Church: "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel: and in nothing terrified by your adversaries . . . for unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but to suffer for His sake; having the same conflict which ye saw in me and now hear to be in me."² These are some-

¹ See the fine chapter on Courage and Perseverance in Howson's, *The Character of St. Paul*.

² Paul is usually represented in ancient art as bearing a sword.

thing more than "brave words." They are the fine and fit utterance of an essentially heroic soul. And they shatter the strange delusion that a morality which lays greater stress on passive endurance than on active virtue, is in any sense easier or demands less courage. There is a heroism of suffering as well as of doing. It sometimes costs more to restrain anger than to retaliate; and the trophies of peace and forgiveness are not less honourable than those of war and contention. Heroic devotion, it has been said, takes many forms—the Saviour's Cross, the martyr's stake, the soldier's glory, the patience of daily suffering—but the spirit of consecration in which the Lord gave His life for the world is at once the ideal and norm of all possible manifestations.¹

(2) Once again in the *matter of renunciation and affirmation* the apostle maintains a beautiful proportion. Paul is debtor to the Greeks as well as to the Hebrews, and in his attitude to all the great questions of his time Greek culture has its place not less than Jewish restraint. We have already seen that Paul honours the intellect appealing repeatedly to judgment and reason in men, and this without disparagement to the lower powers. If he says, "I buffet my body and bring it in subjection," it is only that it may be the fitter instrument of higher service. If he enjoins renunciation of the world, it is only in so far as it is evil. The world of sense is to be conquered not by suppression but by redemption. Paul is no ascetic. Every gift of God is good if used wisely and with due regard to the welfare of others. Nowhere does he make morality consist in celibacy or abstention from meat or drink. Temperance is his ideal to be modified only at the clear call of altruism. We have

¹ Newman Smyth.

already noted the resolute spirit in which he meets the ascetic tendencies of certain parties in Rome and Colosse. In his own case he deemed it better not to marry, but he lays down no general rule for all. Self-renunciation is only a means to an end, and if at times he commends abstinence it is as a temporary service of love. Against the background of the earlier moral systems and especially of Stoicism, the grandeur of the Pauline ethics stands clearly revealed. Stoicism narrowed life by suppressing its freedom, while it aimed at the withering of the emotions and the suppression of the passions. Paul everywhere taught and enjoined development and self-expression as the true goal of life. The monastic ideal which prevailed in the earlier centuries of Christianity obtains no support from his teaching. The Buddhist conception—that redemption consists in the withdrawal of oneself from the things of this world—is entirely opposed to the spirit of the apostle. “Use the world,” he exclaims, “while not abusing it.” “Ye have been called unto liberty,” he writes to the Galatians. “All things are yours,” he says to the Corinthians—“The world, life, death, things present, things to come—all are yours, and ye are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”

(3) The same may be said with regard to the *relation of the individual to the social virtues*. Here, too, he strikes the balance. Each man is to bear his own burden, but the apostle is quick to add that we are to bear one another’s burdens. While the individual has to cultivate his personal character, he can only do so by having regard to the affairs of his neighbour. For we are all parts of a larger whole, and just as the various members of the bodily organism find their exercise and use in the service of the entire body, so individuals must

not live to themselves alone, but in mutual dependence and reciprocal devotion.

4. Note finally the *comprehensiveness and universality* of the apostle's moral ideal. Man exists in a variety of relationships. He is a member of the family, the state, the Church; he has duties to himself, to his fellow-men, and to God, and it will be found that the ideal which Paul proclaims extends to all these relations and touches life at every point. Co-extension with humanity is the necessary implicate of the Christian ideal. It will be our task later on to show that the ethic of Paul takes account of man's life in all his complex relationships and conditions. In the meantime, we content ourselves with affirming its sufficiency. It will be found that the ideal not only extends to every sphere of life, but embraces all the highest ends of being. In this organic comprehension of the ideal, social welfare not less than individual attainment is included. Nothing was too trivial or insignificant for the apostle to deal with. Work and pleasure, dress and ornament, eating and drinking, worship and common life, the position of woman, the relation of husband and wife, of parents and children, of masters and servants, of rulers and subjects—all the manifold interests and activities of life have a moral worth. There are no indifferent acts; no sphere of action or of thought is outwith the moral ideal or beyond the jurisdiction of the Lord of Life. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of Christ." And the apostle's ideal is as universal as it is all-embracing. He appeals to man as man. He knows no aristocracy of rank or intellect. The Christian ideal is the same for all. "Admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ."¹ In this respect we see at once

¹ Col. i. 28.

the crucial contrast between the ethics of the Christian and the pre-Christian world. In general, classic morality does not escape the limitation of a particularistic conception of the good. It cleaves humanity in twain by an arbitrary line of separation. The Greek moralists divided the world into Greeks and Barbarians, masters and slaves, wise and illiterate: and the blessings of life were attainable by the favoured few alone, the aristocracy of the race. "The temper of Stoicism," says Lightfoot, "was essentially aristocratic and exclusive, while professing the largest comprehension it was practically the narrowest of all the philosophical castes."¹ Zeno's remarkable prediction of one state has often been cited as an evidence of the universality of Stoicism. But how far the Stoic idea fell short of the Christian conception of the kingdom of God may be gathered from Plutarch's commentary upon it. "What Zeno only saw in a dream that has Alexander actually accomplished."² As Neander has remarked, Zeno could not see how such a thought could ever be realized; and the great world-conqueror only attained the semblance of unity, a mere external peace, by the force of arms, by the subjugation of humanity under one sway. Nor did Plato and Aristotle ever get beyond the limitations of their time and country. Plato's ideal republic was bounded by the Greek state, while the ethics of Aristotle contemplated nothing greater or more exalted than the sphere of this earthly existence. The kingdom of humanity as conceived by Paul was an idea utterly foreign to the habit of mind of the great masters of Greek philosophy. It is true that the later Stoics preached a kind of cosmopolitanism and equality of man, but we have only to compare the negative,

¹ *Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 322.

² Quoted by Neander.

colourless sentiments of an Epictetus or a Seneca with the warm, positive precepts of the Pauline epistles to see how far short the Stoic ideal comes of the Christian conception of brotherhood and charity—the unity of a perfect man in Christ.

In this chapter we have considered the nature and contents of Paul's ideal, and have discussed some of its more important characteristics, comparing it briefly with the ideals of antiquity; and we have seen that the key to all that Paul taught is summed up in that word so often upon his lips *ἐν Χριστῷ*, "in Christ." That expression at once determines the content and scope of his ethic, giving to it its distinctiveness, its absoluteness, and its universality. No bolder hope was ever cherished by man than that of the possibility of raising every individual to such a height that he shall become a moral law unto himself. If we ask where did the apostle obtain this splendid conception of life, we can only answer he learned it in the school of Christ. The risen Lord, who appeared to him on the way, transfigured his life and made all things new. There is henceforth but one thing needful for him who has heard the Father's call; he must walk worthy of this God who has called him to His kingdom and to His glory.¹

¹ 1 Thess. ii. 12.

CHAPTER V

THE DYNAMIC OF THE NEW LIFE

FROM the very earliest days of ethical speculation, the need of some "virtue making power" has been recognized. Naturally the conception of the "power" has varied with the character of the ideal, and with the more or less adequate sense of the resistance to be overcome. With Socrates, who may be regarded as the earliest of the Greek moralists, virtue and knowledge were simply the two sides of an equation. Vice is ignorance, although it may be culpable ignorance—"the lie in the soul." This is in essence only a part of that overestimate of knowledge which has persisted not only in philosophical but even in religious thought down to our own day. To Socrates it is simply unthinkable that evil is wrought by want of will. Let man but see the good and he will seek it inevitably. Morality is only a question of instruction. Socrates thus defined the moral idea according to a eudaemonistic standard, failing to distinguish theoretic knowledge and practical conviction which determines the will.

Plato's conception of the highest good exalts him above all previous workers in the realm of ethics, and embodies an ideal which not only shaped Greek philosophy but determined the character of all subsequent

moral enquiry. For it was he who first lifted his eyes to that world of ideas which exists beyond and above this evanescent earthly life, and declared the destiny of the soul to be deliverance from the prison-house of sense through union with the eternal. But Plato's republic was an aristocracy only, a valhalla of moral heroes. Virtue was spiritual aesthetics, the contemplation of the morally beautiful. And, like Socrates before him, Plato has no answer to the question, how shall he who is without natural aptitude for the morally beautiful attain to the beatific vision? Plato came to call the righteous not sinners to repentance. No place could be found in his ideal state for the morally unfit, for the spiritually blind. And while the uneducated herd were left wholly outside, even for the candidates of the virtuous life no adequate provision was made against disastrous surprise or fall. It was tacitly assumed that theory and practice were equivalent, and that the mere knowledge of virtue guaranteed the actual acquirement and retention of it.

Aristotle finds the highest good in the contemplative life lived in a perfect environment. To reach the goal of right thinking and right willing, suitable gifts of nature, favourable surroundings and proper instruction are indispensable conditions. Virtue is not virtuous until it is a habit. The only way to be virtuous is to practise virtue, and happiness is but another name for the outflowing of energy in this great endeavour. Dealing, towards the close of the *Nicomachean ethics*, with the question, how shall men become good?, Aristotle can only make the disappointing suggestion that the state must compel them. For him, as for Plato, there is no real hope for the bad, since the very presupposition of the moral life is already existent virtue.

The result of all this is that the ethics of Greece, noble and imposing as it is, simply hangs in the air. There is no real point of contact with life, no lifting power. It must not be inferred that the work done by ancient moralists was in all respects a failure. They were the pioneers of moral philosophy. They broke new ground. They estimated the value of motives. They deduced the demand for virtue from the nature of man. But where they came short was in failing to supply an inspiration to their age, in bringing to bear upon the wills of men no adequate motive-force. "They stood aloof from human nature, and viewed it from the outside as an object of natural history."¹ And as a consequence of this, speculative ethics expressed itself chiefly "in the construction of ideal figures." Plato's ideal state remained a theory only: it was never meant to be realized. Aristotle's virtuous man existed, and could only exist, in the mind of his creator. The ideal figure always transcended the range of ordinary conditions. The harmonious life demanded a favourable society as its background. Nor was the Stoic more successful in making his philosophy of life a thing of actuality. His aim was to keep himself independent of the sordid pursuits of the unenlightened and to occupy himself solely with theoretic aspirations. His conception of true manhood was the life according to reason which gave up the riddle of the world, and his idea of the "wise man," except as supplying a regulative principle for an individual here and there, was impracticable and unrealizable.²

Beautiful as these old-time ideals were, they lacked impelling force, the power to change conceptions into inspirations, dreams into realities. Aristotle put his finger upon the weak spot, not of Plato's system only,

¹ Strong, *Christian Ethics*, p. 7.

² Strong, p. 10.

but of his own as well, indeed of all pre-Christian theories, when he pointed out that its deficiency lay in its narrow intellectualism. The old question which the "master" raised, but was himself unable successfully to meet, was left without an answer in Greek philosophy—how to realize the ideal, how to translate theory into practice, how, in a word, to make the unjust just and the foolish wise?

The problem which baffled Greek philosophy, it is the glory of Christianity to have solved. The Christian ethic was no mere theory of truth, or vision of the good;

"A dream for life too high.

. . . A bird that hath no feet for earth."

The word was made flesh. The good was manifested in a life, and He who lived the life claimed to be not merely a moral teacher but a Creator, not only a pattern but a Power. "I am," He said, "the way, the truth, and the life." The first Christians were known as those belonging to the "way,"¹ and the practical character of Christianity was thus indicated. It was not merely a philosophic dream of perfection floating in the air or existing only in the imagination of a few visionaries. It was a new creative-force—a spirit given and received, to be worked out and realized in the actual life and conduct of common men and women.

It was in this manner that Paul regarded the moral life: it was a thing conditioned and dominated by a new spiritual force. It was a life inspired by and lived in Christ. This is what we have to consider in the present chapter. How did Paul conceive the Dynamic of the Ethical Life: and what in his view are the means of its realization?

¹ Acts ix. 2.

I.

The Dynamic Power on its divine side. Christian ethics, and in particular Pauline ethics, is distinguished from philosophical ethics not so much by the uniqueness of its ideal as by the recognition of a single definite force which lies at the root of the new life, and forms a fresh spring of ethical activity. We cannot, however, agree with Wrede when he says that "the ethic of St. Paul exhibits in the contents of its demands few original traits."¹ Nor can we accept the somewhat rash statement of Prof. M'Giffert, when he affirms that "there was comparatively little difference between the ethical principles of the Christians and the principles of the best men in the pagan world."² Without dwelling upon that point with which the previous chapter dealt, it may be sufficient here to state that what in the first place differentiated Christian from pre-Christian ethics was the fact that its ideal was historically embodied and actually realized in the life of Jesus Christ. The object of the New Testament writers was to bring His example to bear upon the conduct of their fellow-men. Here was no imaginative picture such as the ancients drew, but the historical record of an actual life. Christianity claims that its ideal has been realized. That fact of itself is sufficient to give uniqueness to the New Testament morality. It is no philosopher's dream. It is matter of history. The Christian ideal has been embodied, the ideal life has been lived.

At first sight it might seem as if this were the only difference between classical and Pauline ethics—that in the one case the ideal was imaginary, a poetic vision merely, while in the other the ideal was a realized fact.

¹ *Paulus*, p. 69.

² *The Apostolic Age*, p. 506.

But if the visionary ideal of the ancients failed to change men's lives largely because it was external to the will, the Christian ideal would not be likely to be more successful simply by being historical.¹ The actual portrayal of perfection by Christ did indeed give a definiteness and reality to the moral ideal which the dreams of Greek philosophy did not possess. But on the other hand, the very loftiness of this holy life would be more likely to condemn as hopeless every unaided attempt to achieve it and so would even tend to paralyse all moral effort. It would be felt that it was as much beyond the ability of man to attain to the perfection of a holy life as to perform the requirements of a holy law.

Hence the urgent problem which confronted the apostle. How can man achieve that good which has been embodied in the life and example of Jesus Christ? how can he, or any common man attain to the righteousness of the one harmonious Son, and stand justified before His Father God? Not the mere vision of the good as it floated before the minds of the Greeks, not the mere knowledge of the law as promulgated by Hebrew moralists, not even the embodiment of the ideal in the historical Person of Christ was sufficient to make the moral life available for common men and women. Not to dream of good, but to *be good*—that is man's greatest need. To tap the sources of power, to link his weakness with an all-conquering strength—nothing short of that is necessary if man is ever to attain to holiness of life. From the depth of his moral struggle man lifts that despairing cry, never more powerfully expressed than by Paul himself; "to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find

¹Strong, *Christian Ethics*, p. 52.

not. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin.”¹ But though Paul recognizes the conflict between the ideal and the fulfilment he does not admit that the antithesis is irreconcilable. His whole argument is designed to show that the Christian ideal is not a dream, an aspiration only, but a fact at once realized and realizable. He claims that the Gospel not only reveals the good, but discloses a power which makes the good possible. The originality of this position lies not only in the moral conception of the new life in Christ, but also in the hitherto unattempted derivation of the life from a new birth under the influence of the Spirit of God. If faith, hope, charity, and all the other manifestations of the moral life are anything more than mere abstractions of the mind, if they are actual facts of the Christian experience, then they demand a distinctive force behind them which gives to them reality. Their existence in the world as realized graces of character, as virtues that have been actually manifested, bears witness to a life behind, to a power to which they owe their being. That there is such a moral life Paul never doubts. What he calls, now, “the life of faith,” now, “the life of the Spirit,” and now “the new life,” is one which he believes to be actually existent. Though Paul cannot be accused of boasting, he does not hesitate to adduce his own case as an example of one who has entered upon such a life. And the state to which he himself has attained, he desires that others may share. He recognizes the existence of Christian virtue in the world.

¹ Rom. vii. 18 ff.

He sees a decisive contrast between the lives of those who acknowledge the authority of Christ and those of the surrounding pagan people. His epistles are written not to heathen men and women untouched by higher influences, but to communities in which a certain measure of Christian virtue is not only recognized but practised. He is convinced of the growing and expanding influence of this life, and before his mind there arises the vision of a redeemed world, a transformed humanity, when, not here and there in isolated localities of the earth only, but everywhere, men shall be combined in one perfect society and all unitedly shall attain unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of Christ. What was for Paul a prophecy, a thing of prevision and faith, has become for us to-day largely a reality. "Rising out of the silence and solitude, coming with no carnal weapons, appearing with no gorgeous accompaniments, this power may be said to have filled the habitable world. It has touched every department of life, and everything it has touched has been transformed. It has given a new turn to ethics. It has given a new department to politics. . . . It has developed the institutions of modern charity. It has released the bonds of despotism. It has tightened the bonds of family and home. All this, and a hundred things more, Christianity we do not say has claimed to do, but has actually done."¹

Now, the question Paul sought to answer, and which is fundamental to Christian ethics is this—what was, and whence came, the power which could effect such changes in the individual man and in the social life of the community? There must be a cause proportionate to the effect, a power adequate to explain such mighty transformations.

¹ Geo. Matheson, *Landmarks of New Testament Morality*, p. 139.

First of all, Paul does not for a moment hesitate in affirming that the power to achieve the moral life does not lie in the natural man. The mere development of the natural powers, or the education of the human faculties, will not effect the change. No readjustment of circumstances, no state-compulsion, no spread of knowledge or progress of civilization, is of itself equal to the task of creating that entirely new phenomenon in the world—the Christian character. This new life, which Paul himself was conscious of possessing, and which he recognized in others, was quite beyond the power of man to realize. The apostle leaves us in no manner of doubt that some renewing and transforming energy must act upon man before such a life is possible. “Nothing,” he says, “availeth but a new creature.” The new ethical state can only come about by a complete renewal of man’s inner nature, in virtue of which he becomes conscious that the divine anger is averted, that he is a pardoned child of God, that he is no more under the power of sin, but is translated from the domain of the flesh into the kingdom of the spirit.¹ The revelation of the divine morality is one which flesh and blood could not give, but which owes its origin to a cause commensurate with itself. The claim which Paul makes for Christianity is that it is a communicated life. He declares that the gospel has brought a new force into the world, and that with the coming of Christ men have received not only new ideals and aspirations, but a new power by which these ideals and aspirations may be, and have been, realized. In the life of Christ moral excellence reaches its height. An instance of true human obedience is before the world. All that Greek sages dreamt of and Hebrew prophets sighed after has been

¹ Rom. vi. 6.

realized in historical form. But that is not enough. A mere example, even the highest, will not avail of itself. The principle and secret of that life must be unsealed, otherwise it will remain at best a distant ideal and fade into a remote memory.¹ For Paul, therefore, there arises the question, is there any force which will not only preserve the ideal which has been given in Christ from fading away, but make it a real and living power in men's lives? He believes that there is, and the aim of his whole teaching is to show what that power is and how it acts. Christ for the apostle is no mere historical embodiment of perfection. He does not simply present for the imitation of mankind an example of unblemished virtue. He is the *creator* of a new humanity. He is a new man, the second Adam, "the first fruits of a spirit that had grafted itself afresh on the old tree of human life."² That spirit which dwells in its fulness in Christ repeats itself in the lives and experiences of His followers.

Though Paul was not likely to have access to any written records of Christ's life and ministry on earth, he had come into contact with some of the apostles, especially with Mark and Luke (both of whom became biographers of Jesus), and he could not be ignorant that Christ always represented Himself as acting in the power and under the direct influence of the Spirit of God. Nor could he fail to be cognisant of the fact that with the promised outpouring of the Spirit after the departure of Christ, not only the Master's life, but His work and resurrection, had a new significance for His followers. After Pentecost everything was changed. A new power seemed to be liberated, a new force made available, which

¹ Strong, *Christian Ethics*, p. 55.

² Matheson, *Landmarks of New Testament Morality*, p. 140.

worked in and through the great facts of Christ's life, and made them living factors in the experience of all who accepted them by faith.

Hence it is that when Paul speaks of the new ethical state of believers, he represents it generally as a renewal, a rebirth of the Holy Spirit. This renewal, whether it takes place suddenly or gradually, is an act of divine creative activity. "All things are of God," he declares, "who hath reconciled us to Himself." "Ye are justified by the Spirit of God," he writes to the Corinthians.¹ The renewal is in fact represented as a new birth, a new creation, inasmuch as it comes about by the act of God's Spirit alone. Man in the very essence of his being is recreated after the divine image. "Not by the works of righteousness which we have done," he writes to Titus, "but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

But while the apostle represents generally the renewal as resulting from the influence, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, he connects its working in particular with two facts in the life of Christ, which for him are the most important in history,—the *Sacrifice* and the *Resurrection*. These two facts are closely connected in Paul's mind, and their significance for the ethical life of man lies in the very nature of Christ Himself. Who is this man whose life and death have such supreme value? He is for Paul none other than "Lord," in some way identified with Jehovah, the God of the old covenant.² But though Christ is thus identified with God, He is not merged in the being of God. He has a separate and distinct personality, in virtue of which there are assigned to Him unique mediatorial functions. To Him is given the work of reconciliation, and by His life of obedience

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

² Strong, *ibid.*

and death upon the Cross He has not only fulfilled the law, but removed the barrier of sin and opened up the way of access to God. This historical being is therefore more than the realized ideal of man. He has all the value of God; He has even all the power which God Himself has: the power of renewing men and making them like Himself the sons of God. Here we are in the region of dogmatics rather than ethics, and it does not concern us to present a theory of the atonement. All we have here to do with is the fact that between man and the new life lies sin, the real source of man's failure and the stumbling-block which must be removed before reconciliation with the Father can be effected. The deed which, according to the teaching of the apostle, alone meets the case is the sacrifice of Christ. In the light of his Hebrew training and of his own experience, Paul sees that nothing else than a perfect propitiation for sin can restore the broken harmony between God and man and make the new life possible. This, Christ, in virtue of His unique union with the Father and of His special relation to man, is qualified and enabled to achieve. Many passages in the epistles show the significance for Paul of Christ's death. It is sufficient to quote two. Writing to the Ephesians he says, "But now in Jesus Christ, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."¹ And to the Corinthians he writes, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ."² It is the task of theology to bring together these and other passages of Scripture and exhibit their systematic connection, as well as their relative values for a doctrine of soteriology. Whatever be our theory of atonement, the ethical result of the death of Christ is, according to Paul, the reconciliation of God

¹ Eph. ii. 13.

² 2 Cor. v. 18.

and man. In virtue of what Christ has achieved, a fundamentally new relationship exists. God and man are now organically in full moral accord and deep vital union.

But not less important than the sacrifice of Christ as a factor in creating the new life of the Christian is, in Paul's view, the *Resurrection*. Both are indeed for him complementary truths. The resurrection is the crown and seal of the Sacrifice. It is the one fact which sheds light upon the nature of Christ and the significance of His work. He who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh was declared to be the Son of God by the Resurrection. It was the certainty that He had risen that gave to His death its sacrificial value. This was the ground of the apostle's conviction that the old order had passed away and that a new order had been established. "If Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins."¹

It is, however, in no external or mechanical way that Paul conceives the work of Christ. It is not an influence exerted outside of and upon man. It is a power working *within* the soul. The key to the new life is to be found in the mystical union of the Christian with the risen Redeemer. The act of Christ in its twofold form of death and resurrection, has its counterpart and expression in the experience of redeemed man. The great central truth for Paul, on which indeed his whole ethical teaching rests, is that man is born again into a new life by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is no metaphorical truth or symbolic representation merely for the apostle. It is a literal fact, a great spiritual truth. The Christian is supposed by Paul to have experienced, literally, the death and resurrection of Christ, and to have become a new man. The apostle learned this truth

¹ Strong, *Christian Ethics*, p. 61.

from his own experience. In that hour on the road to Damascus, when he was apprehended of Christ, convicted of sin, and brought as by a flash to see the truth as it is in Jesus, he himself died and he rose again. He became a new creature, old things passed away, all things became new. What was true of him was likewise true of all believers. That is the story of every redemption. Within the secret sanctuary of each human soul the history of Christ is ever re-enacted.¹ This thought finds typical expression in 2 Cor. v. 14 ff.: "If one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." In the sixth chapter of Romans a similar line of thought is followed. The "old man" is crucified with Jesus, that the body of sin might be done away, and that we should no longer be in bondage to sin. But if we die with Christ we shall also live with Him. In all the passages which refer to this subject, the idea in Paul's mind which he seeks to emphasize is that the changed life, in virtue of which Christ comes to dwell in the heart, is based upon an ethical dying and rising again with Christ.² Or as he sometimes puts it, Christ becomes the element in which the new life moves and has its being,³ and from which it henceforth derives its strength and purpose. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."⁴

We have already remarked that Paul frequently represents renewal as the work of the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God. It will not be necessary here to discuss the difficult question of the precise relation of Christ to the Spirit. In some passages, as in 2 Cor. iii. 17, Christ

¹ "Every soul in which conversion has taken place is a symbol of the history of the world." Amiel.

² Eph. iii. 16, 17.

³ Eph. v. 8.

⁴ Gal. ii. 20.

is identified with the Spirit, and in the following verse the two are combined in one title, "The Lord Spirit." Indeed, it may be said that the terms "Spirit," "Spirit of God," and "Spirit of Christ," are practically identical in the Pauline epistles. Again and again he places the two expressions, "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ" side by side, and, indeed, seems to attribute to them a similar value in regard to their influence upon Christians. Whether or no we can say with Wernle, "Paul spares no effort to bring the spirit under the influence of Jesus," and that it is "the apostle's merit to have Christianized the spirit," it may not be too much to say that in his frequent use of the term "Spirit of Christ," he has given definiteness and personality to an idea which from its previous employment, both in Greek philosophy and Jewish scripture, might have been misleading and vague. We owe it to Paul that the expression "Spirit of Christ" is the peculiar possession of Christians, and that when we as Christians attribute our renewal to the Spirit of God, or to the Holy Spirit, we are justified in recognizing in the divine influence the presence of the living Christ. In the making of a Christian all three persons of the Holy Trinity are engaged; and it would be a bold man who would say, "This I owe to the Spirit of God, this to Christ, and this to the Holy Ghost." Each works through all, and all work through each. God works *for* us, and *upon* us, and *in* us. The threefold doxology with which Paul closes so many of his epistles is the expression of our faith, but the secret of our life, and the inspiration of our activity, must ever be that sublime word in which Paul sums up his Christian experience—"the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." ¹

¹ Gal. ii. 20.

The new creature then is the work of Christ. But His creative power is not an external influence, but an inner spirit of life. He Himself is the head, and Christians are members of His body, in vital union with which they find their peace and joy. All that makes life, life indeed—an exalted, harmonious and completed existence—is derived from union with Christ. But this life in Christ, complete and perfect though in one sense it is, is only the starting-point of the ethical life. The dynamic force is there: it has to be appropriated and realized. It is just here that we see the greatness of Paul as an ethical teacher. It would have been easy for him to say, “Nothing more is required of the Christian. It is enough to know that the Spirit of God has taken possession of a man. Jesus Christ dwells in him as a new energy, quickening his mortal body and delivering him from the guilt and dominion of sin. What need is there of more?” “There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” But it is just here that the apostle asserts his moral claim. Possession of power implies obligation to use it. The Spirit of Christ is not given to free us from the duties of the moral life. It is the basis upon which that life is to be reared, and the power by which it is to be realized. Paul knew human nature, and how easily a man might rest in the indolence of spiritual pride, and so turn his very privileges into occasions of evil. Hence he says to the Galatians, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”¹ To the Romans he writes, “Now we are delivered from the law . . . that we should serve in newness of spirit”;² and to the Colossians, “As ye have received Jesus Christ, the Lord, so walk ye in Him”; and once more to the Romans, “Put ye on the Lord

¹ Gal. v. 25.

² Rom. vii. 6.

Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”¹ It is true that all is of God, who worketh in us both to will and to do, yet the Christian is exhorted to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, lest the great work of God in him and through him should prove of none effect.

II.

This brings us naturally to consider the *subjective* or *personal element* in the creation of the new life. We have to study at this point the relation of the Spirit of Christ to the human personality—the relation of the divine and human in the ethics of Paul. From what we have said of the influence and possession of the indwelling spirit in man, it might appear as if, in the apostle’s view, there was no room for self-determination on man’s part. Man is simply the passive recipient of the divine—the vessel into which God pours His spirit, and which henceforth takes whatever shape and character the new content gives it. Sometimes, indeed, Paul does speak of the spirit under the image of a material effusion,² as when he says the love of God is shed abroad or *poured forth* into our hearts.³ But innumerable passages in which the action of the spirit is referred to, preclude such a crude and materialistic interpretation of the apostle’s meaning. It is true, indeed, that Paul nowhere attempts to solve the antinomy which lies in the notion of freedom. He does not once discuss the problem of free-will. It causes him no difficulty. He simply places side by side the two moments of the antithesis—divine power and human determination. On the one hand, he states in the most emphatic way that every moral impulse and act on the part of man is due

¹ Rom. xiii. 14.² Wernle, vol. i. p. 257.³ Rom. v. 5.

to the working of God. "If in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world, it is by the grace of God."¹ "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure."² It is the very God of peace who is to sanctify the Thessalonians through and through.³ It is God who, having begun a good work in the Philippians, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.⁴ But, on the other hand, no less emphatic is he in ascribing to the individual full freedom of action. The Spirit of Christ is not conceived as a mechanical force or irresistible influence. Renewal takes place, indeed, by the working of God, but it cannot come about without the personal co-operation of man. Paul recognizes a latent activity even in the very passivity of the receptive subject. Man has his part to play, both at the beginning and in the subsequent course of the new life. Not only is he "to put on the new man," "to put on the armour of light," "to put on the Lord Jesus Christ"; but he is "to stand fast in the Lord."⁵

We pass from the "life in the spirit" to the "walk in the spirit" by an act of free resolution. If Christians have put on Christ, then the obligation rests upon them to do so continually, so that they may be gradually assimilated to His image. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit," but it behoves man "not to fulfil the lusts thereof."⁶ It is the work of the Christian continually to mortify his members.⁷

If, therefore, the motive power of the Christian ethical life is the Spirit of Christ, it must not be conceived as operating by an irresistible necessity. It must rather be

¹ 2 Cor. i. 12.

² Phil. ii. 13.

³ 1 Thess. v. 23.

⁴ Phil. i. 6.

⁵ Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 3, 10; Rom. xiii. 12-14; Phil. iv. 1.

⁶ Gal. v. 17; Rom. xiii. 14. ⁷ Col. iii. 5; Rom. viii. 13.

thought of as a power which is to be appropriated by man's moral nature and conditioned by his free action. In his ethical teaching at least, Paul is no determinist.¹ As an evangelist he is constrained to reckon on the liberty of his hearers. His missionary zeal and fiery eloquence would have no meaning if he did not believe that men were free to accept or refuse his message. As a preacher the refrain of his appeal is "let not the grace of God be offered to you in vain." Freedom is, indeed, the distinctive note of Paul's ethical conception of life. Life is a great and solemn trust committed to each by God, for the use or abuse of which every man will be called to account. The new life is a life of liberty as the old life was a life of bondage. "If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law."² "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."³ He bids the Galatians "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free."⁴

When we enquire what constitutes the subjective or human element, we find in the New Testament generally two actions which belong to the soul entering upon the new world in Christ—repentance and faith. These two words are complementary and correlative, and constitute together what is commonly called conversion. Repentance in the New Testament, and particularly in Christ's teaching, is a change of mind, the turning away from a life of sin, the breaking off from evil, because a better standard of life has been accepted.⁵ The change may be calm or

¹ "The ethical sense of responsibility, the energy for struggle, and the discipline of will was not paralysed or absorbed in Paul's case by his consciousness of redemption and his profound spiritual experiences." Joh. Weiss, *Paul and Jesus*, p. 113.

² Gal. v. 18.

³ 2 Cor. iii. 17.

⁴ Gal. v. 1.

⁵ Cp. W. N. Clark, *Outlines of Theol.*, pp. 402 ff.

accompanied by keen sorrow in view of sin. Yet it is not the sorrow, but the change of life following on a change of heart, which constitutes repentance. A man repents when he begins to regard his sin as Christ regards it and acts accordingly. It is a sharing of Christ's view of evil, and the determination to break with it. But repentance, though it be the beginning of the new life, does not cease with advance in it. It is an ever recurring act of the believer's experience. Every rejection of a lower life as unworthy is of the nature of repentance, and Christian progress consists in the perpetual rejection of lower ways, and the continual recognition and acceptance of higher ways. But repentance, though it is in a sense "the first step upwards out of unrighteousness towards Christian character,"¹ must not be regarded as a self-originating movement on the part of the natural man. It also is a work of God, prompted and inspired by the Holy Spirit. The man who repents is already in the grip of Christ. He has a vision of the good, and the acts of confession and decision which are essential elements in repentance are the immediate effects of the revelation of Christ, and of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. Here, as elsewhere, the earliest impulse comes from the divine side. "We love Him because He first loved us." It has been remarked that, while repentance is a frequent topic of our Lord's teaching, it has no prominent place in Pauline doctrine.² But though it is true that the apostle does not dwell upon it to the same extent as Christ, as a separate element in conversion, it is undoubtedly implied by him as an essential condition of participation in

¹ Stalker, *The Ethic of Jesus*, p. 175.

² Wendt, *Lehre Jesu*, and Bruce, *Conception of Christianity*, p. 404.

salvation. Referring in his address to the elders of Ephesus to his own activity, extending over three years in the Asiatic capital, Paul says that he had testified to both Jews and Greeks "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."¹ We may assume, therefore, that, though in the presentation of his doctrine in the epistles repentance is not frequently referred to, his preaching "always returned to these two great topics, which would be remembered by his hearers when all details were forgotten—repentance and faith."

If repentance looks back and forsakes, faith looks forward and accepts. In general it is the heartfelt recognition of the living God as revealed in the character and work of Christ. In the teaching of Paul, not less than in that of our Lord, faith is the great watchword. Though fundamentally both mean by the word the same thing, it has for the apostle a more definite, or at least more technical, signification. In his recent work, *The Essence of Christianity*, Harnack² maintains that Christ did not enter as an element into his own preaching. "It is faith in God, the Father alone, not in the Son which Jesus declared." That statement could hardly, as it seems to us, be supported by an examination of Christ's teaching; but, in any case, there is no doubt that Christ was the object of the apostle's preaching. Faith is the outgoing of the whole man towards Christ, a fact rendered all the more significant when we remember that, for the apostle, faith is fundamental and the chief agent in the creation of character. "It is for Paul," says Prof. Bruce, "as for the author of the Epistle to

¹ Cp. Stalker, *The Ethic of Jesus*, p. 175.

² See Stalker, p. 176; also Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, p. 91.

the Hebrews, the mother of heroic achievements, and can not only please God, but enable men to make their lives morally sublime.”¹

As our object is merely to show that Paul recognizes man's part in appropriating energy or power, by which he receives and makes his own the new life in Christ, it will not be necessary to enter upon a full discussion of justification by faith or to analyze minutely the various shades of meaning which the term “faith” has in the apostle's writings. In his *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, Baur has distinguished at least five different shades of meaning in Paul's use of the word “faith,” ranging from mental assent to moral appropriation and practical energy. For our purpose it will be sufficient to notice three.

(1) Sometimes faith means simply the *theoretical acceptance* or intellectual conviction of the facts of salvation as in Rom. iv. 25, or in the declaration that God raised up His Son from the dead. But even in such a case there is always a moral element which depends not upon the knowledge of merely historical fact but upon the personal confidence in God's character and purpose. This confidence is not simply an assent of the mind. “With the heart,” says Paul, “man believes.” What Paul dreads and protests against in his epistles both to the Romans and Galatians is that proud self-satisfied temper of legalism which assumed that mere theoretic acceptance or verbal assent was enough to make a Christian, the mere mental acknowledgment of the terms of the ancient covenant. He is everywhere contending for a new content of the word “faith” which will exhibit itself in overt practical life.

¹ *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p. 225.

(2) And hence it comes to mean for him, *moral trust*—the whole-hearted appropriation of Christ and all that Christ offers to man

“In whom persuasion and belief
Have ripened into faith, and faith become
A passionate intuition.”

For, in Paul's view, faith in Christ means union with Christ. The believer distrusts himself and finds his new life in his Lord. What Christ has done, he gratefully accepts as his own. “Any one who examines Paul's doctrine and religion as a whole must admit that his heart-felt and ultimate intention when using the term ‘faith’ was to denote that pure faculty of receptivity which abandons the guidance of self and simply receives the proffered salvation, accepting justification ‘as a gift’ (*δωρεάν*); thence follows the further idea that faith is the confidence in the possession of righteousness and secure reliance upon the *σωτηρία* to follow in the future.”¹ Faith is thus for the Christian the vision of the ideal. It is the acceptance of Christ's life as his life, and the assurance that as he makes this life his own, the Redeemer's righteousness, grace and beauty are imputed to him. The man is no longer commanded by an authority without but is dominated by a Master within, whose utterance is indistinguishable from the voice and sanction of his own soul. “We are justified by faith,” Paul exclaims. The apostle feels, what all deeply religious souls have ever felt in their greatest moments, that “the outer and the inner light for him are one.” It seems to him as if his mind and the mind of Christ were wholly reconciled. “I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.” No other account can he give

¹ Joh. Weiss, *Paul and Jesus*, p. 109.

of his experience than that his own spirit and that of his Lord are made one in the unity of faith.¹

“A little while there was of Thee-and-me,
And then no more there was of me-and-Thee.”

“The new and significant peculiarity,” says Pfeiderer, “in Paul’s conception of faith, is the mystical union with Christ, the self-identification with Him in a fellowship of life and death. It is in this unreserved self-forgetting surrender of the whole man to the Saviour, in which the revelation of the divine love, as well as the embodiment of the ideal for man is beheld as a personal life, that the believer feels himself to be a new creature. All this is expressed in the fine saying, “It is no longer I that live but Christ that liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”²

Thus it is that faith justifies. This self-renouncing trust God accepts for the righteousness we long after. Justification is no mere fiat of God, no mere arbitrary pronouncement; nor, on the other hand, is it a legal fiction. God reckons the true perfection of life as already ours, because in identifying ourselves with Christ we have entered upon the way of its increasing realization. In the union of the soul with Christ and the consequent participation of His life, there is the pledge and promise of the completion in the believer’s life of the righteousness which is already by anticipation accorded to him.³ Man is in a sense already what he aspires to be. What we believe in we are. There must be something in us of that moral beauty which we

¹ Cp. *Authority in Religion*, J. H. Leckie, p. 104.

² *Das Urchristenthum*, p. 244.

³ Cp. Stevens, *Pauline Theology*, p. 288.

admire in another, and to declare that we believe in Christ and accept Him as the ideal of our faith and endeavour is already to have something of the Christ-life in our soul. The implanted seed contains within it the potency of the completed life.¹ There is an element of Pauline truth in Lowell's poem :

The thing we long for, that we are
For one transcendent moment,
Before the present poor and bare
Can make its sneering comment.
To let the new life in, we know
Desire must ope the portal:
Perhaps the longing to be so
Helps make the soul immortal.

(3) But justification is not all that faith obtains for the Christian. It is *moral energy* as well as spiritual vision. It contains the power of new obedience. In faith, as Paul understands it, lie the roots both of a deeper knowledge of God and of a new ethical activity. Even in the common affairs of life faith is an energetic principle. No matter what be its object it always impels to action. It is the spring of all endeavour, the inspiration of all heroism. Every enterprise is carried out by faith, and by faith every noble aim is achieved. In the Christian life it is not otherwise. In the making of character and in the realizing of the kingdom of God, in all personal and social effort, faith is the power in whose might we expect great things and attempt great things. Christian faith works by love. Love is at once its object and its instrument. For it is faith which first assures us of God's gracious character and of our adoption as His children. And it is faith which enables us in the

¹ As Browning says: "'Tis not what man does but what man would do, which exalts him."

strength of that divine love to live and work for Christ. The Christian not only stands fast in the faith, but by faith also grows and gradually attains to the stature of the perfect man.¹

Faith, then, has a threefold function. It is a vision of the ideal in Christ, it is participation in the "good" of Christ, and it is obedience to the law of Christ. As the principle of moral appropriation it has its root in personal trust and its fruit in Christian service. It opens the understanding to truth; it quickens the spiritual imagination; it contributes moral earnestness to character. It brings the whole life into the domain of spiritual freedom, and is the animating and energizing principle of all moral purpose. Faith, in short, may be considered as the characteristic attitude and action of the whole Christian personality in its relation to the spiritual good offered to it in Christ.

We may sum up the character of faith as thus described in three particulars.

1. It is a *free active* principle of appropriation of the offered good. There is indeed a certain element of passivity in it, for there is always implied in faith a quiet acquiescence in the divine will which is described as a waiting on God. But such calmness of spirit is not to be confounded with apathy or the unconscious assimilation of grace. Even in submissive trust there is a free disposal of oneself. By an act of will we assume the receptive attitude and wait upon God. The Spirit of Christ does not enter a man against his will. The door must be opened from within. The heart must be turned to the light. The hand must be put forth to receive the proffered gift.

2. It is the free and active determination of the whole

¹Cp. W. R. Inge, *Faith and its Psychology*, p. 15.

man. All the faculties of man must unite in one receptive act. Faith is not the property of any single power. It is not with the mind only that we receive Christ. Nor is it with the heart, the feelings, or the will alone that we respond to His Spirit and obey His commands. In belief the entire manhood becomes receptive. Faith is the resultant of all the forces and experiences of the soul. It is the animating principle of every activity. Life answers to life. It is with his whole strength and heart and mind that man must believe.

3. It follows that the appropriating power of faith is not at once perfect or complete. It is a *growing power*. Christ may be really, though not yet fully formed, within us. We receive according to the measure of our faith. The moral life is in Paul's view a progressive life. Growth is the proof of its original vitality. Man is not a thing to be acted upon, but a free spirit to be transformed from within, and it is in accordance with this that the work of faith is not a complete and ready-made product, but the slow and gradual assimilation of grace. There is a going from faith to faith¹ and from strength to strength. Salvation is potentially given at the beginning, but it has to be worked out through the various experiences of life into all the departments of character and conduct, and faith is the continuous endeavour of the soul to realize the possibilities of its ideal.

It only remains to add that the act of faith is not conceived by Paul as a meritorious performance or good work which God rewards with salvation. Paul's whole contention as against the Judaistic legalists is that it is the renunciation of self-righteous claim, a confession of unworthiness, an act of homage to God's grace. It is

¹ Rom. i. 17.

characterized by lowly modesty and an entire absence of self-glory or sense of achievement. Like the bestowal of the Holy Spirit it, too, is the free gift of God, and the believer is what he is, and is able to do what he does because the Father of lights has bestowed upon him the illumination of His Holy Spirit. Faith links us to Christ by vital and indissoluble bonds. In this fact lie its power and its value. Through it we are connected with the Source and Giver of Life. By it we are made sharers of the divine Being. And all that the Christ-life enfolds and is to be, though as yet unseen by us, is ours. As the writer to the Hebrews says, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen": or as another apostle says, "even now are we the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

There thus grows up a mystic union with Christ, an identification of the believer and his Redeemer, so that Christ's acts become his acts. There is a beautiful reciprocity and interchange of giving and receiving, love answering to love, and life to life. In this self-forgetful surrender of the whole man to Christ, the old ego with its inner strife and trembling vanishes and a new self-less personality, a new spiritual manhood takes its place, of which we can give no other explanation than that which Paul offers us, as the secret of his own experience—"No more do I live, but Christ liveth in me." "Faith in Christ" means "life in Christ." And this complete yielding of self and vital union with the Saviour, this dying and rising again is at once man's supreme ideal and the source of all moral greatness.

CHAPTER VI

THE MOTIVES OF THE NEW LIFE

CLOSELY akin to the question of end and of power is the question of motive. The consideration of the motives or sanctions of morality has always been a primal one in ethics, and it usually occupies an important place in treatises on the subject. There must be a motive for all human conduct otherwise it would have no moral content or worth. Action without sanctions would be wholly mechanical and necessitarian, and man would simply be a link in the chain of material causes, and his deeds, good and bad alike, would be but the necessary effects of physical antecedents. Nietzsche, who is a virulent assailer of Paul's teaching, as indeed he is of all Christian ideas, has justly remarked that we must always see the "for" or "wherefore" in an ethical system to understand its character and estimate its moral worth. If we understand by a motive that which moves the will, and by sanctions of morality, the reasons or persuasions to moral conduct as well as the deterrents from disobedience, we shall enquire in this chapter what were the grounds upon which Paul based the new life, and what were the incentives or motives to which he appealed in urging his readers and hearers to make it their own.

The sanctions to which a religion or an ethic appeals are an important element in estimating its worth and a primary test of its elevation. The early natural religions appealed frequently to material ends and sought to secure the obedience of their devotees by preying upon their fears and hopes. Buddhism, though in the main a religion of great spirituality, whose highest good is the annihilation of all personal ends, is yet not without its appeal to the natural desires and native instincts of man. Mohammedanism, on the other hand is emphatically eudaemonistic, holding out to the faithful the promise of sensual delights and gross material happiness in the next world. Inasmuch as the future life scarcely entered into the realm of thought of the Greeks, the motives of rewards and punishments plays but little part in Greek ethics. The Greek, as a rule, hardly considered what to the Christian is so important that "man has forever." He had to seek his full development in this world. The Republic of Plato is an ideal earthly state to be realized amid conditions such as this life presents. Aristotle's ethics also are thoroughly mundane. "Death," he says, "is of all things the most terrible, for it is an end." The wise man accommodates himself prudently to the things of this world, observing the mean between two extremes. Yet both the systems of Plato and Aristotle are based, in a sense, upon happiness as the highest good—though it is a rational happiness to be sought by rational means. Plato does not disdain to appeal to secondary motives of fear and reward, promising material good to those who play their part well in life: and in his doctrine of the transmigration of souls, he reminds his readers that by following evil courses they may sink into lower forms of existence while he incites them to nobility of action

by the prospect of an advance to higher and happier conditions of being.

As we pass from the natural religions to the religions of Scripture we are at once aware of a change of atmosphere. We move in the midst of spiritual ideas. New sanctions and new incentives confront us. It has been said, indeed, that the blessings of the Old Testament are material and temporal while those of the New are spiritual and eternal. But the difference is only one of degree not of kind. It is indeed true that in Hebrew religion material prosperity plays an important part, and the good which the patriarch or pious Jew contemplates is something which will enrich his tribe or advance his people. But the student of the Old Testament cannot fail to perceive that God's revelation of His purposes is progressive, and His dealing with men educative and disciplinary. There is, as we should naturally expect, a certain accommodation of the divine law to the various stages of understanding and moral apprehension of the Jewish people; and on the human side a growing sense of the meaning of life, and an advancing appreciation of the nature of righteousness. The law is the schoolmaster which leads to Christ, and gradually the nation is carried forward by the promise of material benefits which enshrine spiritual blessings. If in the messages of the prophets there is not wanting a large measure of threats and penalties, we must remember the character of the people they were addressing—a people who were but children, wayward and stubborn, and whose imaginations could scarcely rise above the material and the present. At the same time we must judge prophecy by its best, and we shall see that these motives of punishment and reward which occupy such a large place in Old Testament ethics were used as goads and spurs to

stir up the apathetic and indifferent. They were not ends in themselves but were made subservient to higher ideals. Nor are the awards of health, prosperity, divine favour presented as arbitrary adjuncts to morality. They are invariably set forth as the natural and inevitable consequences of evil or good conduct. We must interpret the spirit of Old Testament morality by what it presaged and foreshadowed, and by the religion of holiness which was its crown.

When we turn to the New Testament we find not only the highest ideal presented, but also that it is supported by the loftest of claims—the love of God. The ideal and the motive are one. The highest good is at once aim and incentive. The love of God experienced in Christ is the deepest motive to Christian morality just because it is held forth as the chief good. Love in Christ's eyes is the supreme motive. As we ourselves receive all our good gifts from God, so the giving of them in our turn is the very law of our lives. We only live through God's forgiving love—Jesus presents Himself as the highest pattern of service, and never is man so Godlike as when he stoops to help another. No one can read the discourses of our Lord or the epistles of His apostles without being conscious that he is confronted with the highest motives and appealed to by deeply spiritual aims. Yet the charge of hedonism has been repeatedly levelled against Christianity, and it has often been represented as a religion which enjoins renunciation of this world for the sake of happiness in the next. It must be freely admitted that our Lord frequently represents heaven as a place where His followers will attain to the perfect life, and receive compensation for their present sufferings. He repeatedly refers to the rewards which He gives to His disciples, and does not scruple to paint the pictures

of the future in colours drawn from this earth. But the feature upon which He most frequently dwells is the enjoyment of the company of the great and good of former ages, and above all the fellowship with Himself and with God, His Father and our Father, in the home of many mansions above.¹ He speaks of the love of the Father which is promised to all the members of His kingdom, of all "the other things that shall be added." He speaks also of "the new heavens and the new earth," of "drinking the fruit of the vine new," of "sitting down with the patriarchs," and of inheriting "thrones and crowns." But in the first place, it is to be noted that riches and honours and sensual pleasures, such as are promised by Mohammed to his followers, are entirely absent; and in the second place, that these sayings ought to be taken in connection with, and subordinate to those other and less figurative sayings which present the real nature of the blessedness He speaks of. He who hungers and thirsts after righteousness is filled with righteousness. It is righteousness which is to constitute the character of those who are to dwell in the new heavens and the new earth. It is the pure in heart who shall see God—Whose nature is spirit, light, love. If the word "reward" is felt to be a difficulty let it be remembered that the idea of reward is only hedonistic if it is united with the idea of merit. "If it were possible by good action, and especially by specific works which transcend mere duty to merit happiness, and happiness of a different kind from life in 'the good,' then the purity of the moral incentive would be disturbed."² But the contrary is the case, as is shown by such passages as St. Luke xvii. 7-10

¹ Cp. Stalker, *Ethics of Jesus*, p. 36. See also Jacoby, *Neutestamentliche Ethik*, where the notion of reward is fully discussed.

² Haering, *Ethics of the Christian Life*, p. 129.

and Matthew xx. 1-16. Righteousness and reward are always in correspondence. The promise is no arbitrary gift added on—it is no bribe or payment capriciously bestowed. It is always the natural fruition of moral endeavour and spiritual preparedness.

Jesus laid the very greatest emphasis upon the fear of God. Our Father, He said, who is Lord of Heaven and earth, shall judge of every evil word. In the parable of the talents Jesus reveals a fear of God, such as no Old Testament saint expressed more strongly. Yet this fear is no abject terror, but that side of love which finds expression in confidence and reverent trust. Men are to cast all their care upon Him because He is their Father to whom they are of more value than the flowers of the field and the birds of the air. In the midst of trouble they are to make trial of His love and He shall grant them the attainment of their desire—the Kingdom of Heaven. Happiness, the desire for all that makes life beautiful and noble, has its roots deep in human nature. If we have already tasted life it is not selfish to yearn for its continuance. The man who has risen to the perception of the beauty of truth and goodness, and who finds these in communion with a personal God, is not surely selfish in pressing forward to a more complete realization of them, is indeed less and less selfish as he advances. He forgets self in a greater object—God: and experience shows that this is the man who has always been the most ready to prove his unselfishness in doing and suffering for others.

The sanctions of Christ do not in this respect differ from those of the apostle, which are largely coloured by the same high conception of life. The charge of hedonism is, we might almost say, even less applicable to the teaching of Paul than to that of Jesus. He, not less

than his Master, does not scruple to support the claims of morality by the sanctions of divine rewards and punishments. But by reason of a certain poetic figurativeness and allegorical picturesqueness in the language of Jesus, which we miss in the writings of Paul, it might seem, at least to the superficial reader, as if the apostle appealed to higher and less materialistic motives than his Lord. But if his language is less metaphorical it is not less emphatic. Knowing the terror of the Lord he seeks to persuade men. More than once he adds to a catalogue of vices the threat that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.¹ He urges his Corinthian converts to cleanse themselves from all defilements of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, *because of the promises*.² He bids the same church continue in patient endurance of present evil, animating them with a tender and comforting assurance of future recompense. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."³ But here, as in so many of the sayings of our Lord, it is evident that the charge of hedonism is a meaningless one. In passages like these the idea of reward is merged in a yearning which has lost sight of all petty motives and passes into a glorious expectation of a fuller and grander life which is to follow as the result of unwearied fidelity in this present life. And so generally it is only a crude misconception of the apostle's meaning to interpret such passages as

¹ Gal. v. 21; 2 Cor. v. 10.

² 2 Cor. vii. 1.

³ 2 Cor. iv. 17-18.

1 Thess. i. 10, and Romans v. 9, as if he taught that the death and resurrection of Christ were only to be believed because they ensured deliverance from the wrath to come, and the gift of eternal life. Eternal life, signifying as it does a life of conscious fellowship with God—a life which is to be begun here, but to be consummated hereafter—is surely no selfish aim to set before man. Not to seek it, to be indifferent to all its inherent blessings and joys, would not be the mark of pure disinterestedness, but the evidence rather of a lack of appreciation of what life and its possibilities even here involve. To bid men live and strive for the highest they know, to aim at the realization of that heavenly bliss of which, even upon the earth, we have in Christ some dim vision and foretaste, is surely to appeal to no selfish motive.

In his *Easter Day* Browning shows us how the yearning for a higher good grows in intensity the more unselfish a man becomes:

“Thou Love of God! Or let me die
Or grant what shall seem heaven almost!
Only let me go on, go on,
Still hoping ever and anon
To reach one eve the Better Land!”

Whatever Paul's argument may be he never loses sight of the absoluteness and intrinsic value of the spiritual life as an end in itself. If at times he refers to the awards and penalties which are necessarily involved in the intelligent comprehension of every great privilege, he employs them as incentives to the realization of the high calling of life in Christ rather than as ends to be pursued or to be shunned in themselves. He exhorts the Philippians to trustful and determined perseverance,

reminding them that "He who hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."¹

It is indeed true that Christianity has not always been presented in its purest forms, and too often prudence, superstitious fear and other-worldliness have been made the motives of goodness, as if the Gospel knew no higher claims. Even such an acute thinker as Paley bases morality upon no higher ground than enlightened self-interest. "Virtue," he defines, as the "doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God and for the sake of everlasting happiness."²

Such misrepresentations of the real nature and sanctions of the Gospel, which were common among the utilitarian moralists of the eighteenth century, have led secularist writers to assume that it is a nobler thing to do one's duty without thought of God and without hope of reward. A recent writer, Professor Westermarck, in his masterly work on the *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, goes the length of saying that the association of religion and morality has been in many ways disadvantageous to the cultivation of the latter. For the demands of conscience are then apt to be satisfied by the performance of formal religious rites to the exclusion of more substantial acts of morality. "The frequent assumption," he says, "that the moral law would hardly command obedience without the belief in retribution beyond the grave is contradicted by an overwhelming array of facts." Thus we hear of the Bedouins that "the practice of religion may be taken as the sure index of low morality in a tribe." Of the Mohammedan peoples we are told "that those who attended to their prayers most regularly were the greatest scoundrels." And that the Copts "unite extreme religious bigotry

¹ Phil. i. 6.

² Paley, *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*.

with deceit, faithlessness and indulgence in sensual pleasure." "It is a common experience that contact with a higher civilization exercises a deteriorating influence upon the conduct of uncultured races, although we may be sure that Christian missionaries do not fail to impart the doctrine of hell to their savage converts." These quotations only show that Prof. Westermarck, with all his profound and subtle philosophical insight, fails to grasp and appreciate the real character and meaning of the Christian religion. If the Bedouins, Mohammedans, and Copts present a low morality, it is not because they have too much religion but because they have too little, and the little they have consists in belief in the efficacy of external rites and forms and not in spiritual ideas. No reputable Christian missionary of to-day would ever imagine that in imparting the doctrine of hell he was teaching the essential character of the religion of Jesus. Over against the "overwhelming array of facts" adduced by Prof. Westermarck, it would not be difficult to produce a still weightier host in proof of the power of Christian faith in heathen lands, and to show that holiness, spirituality of life, union with God, so far from being hindrances to morality, have been the true cause and condition of good conduct and moral life in millions of converts.

Those moralists who speak of the doing of duty without the thought of God as being a nobler thing, regard morality as the ultimate end of man, and religion as merely a means to that end, whereas Christ and Paul make religion not a means merely but the crown of life. Life in union with God is the great end for which man is here. Morality is a necessary means to such a life, the mode of its expression; but it is not the life itself.¹

¹ Cp. Illingworth, *Christian Character*, p. 107.

Noble as it may be to live truly, even without the thought of God, the man who thus lives does not attain to such a rich or complete conception of life as he who lives with God for his object. To be spiritual is to be more than moral, and it is a harder requirement, as it is a higher attainment of manhood, to make the love of God at once the motive and end of our life.

“’Tis by comparison an easy task
Earth to despise: but to converse with heaven
That is not easy.”¹

In proportion as we rise to this ideal, every virtue, every duty, every action becomes an expression of love, a mode of fellowship and union with God.

If Christianity has sometimes been misrepresented by its friends and caricatured by its foes, unworthy moral sanctions receive no countenance from the apostle Paul. To appreciate his appeal we must take his teaching as a whole. Its very essence is the repudiation of all legalism and slavish compulsion. Christian conduct is distinguished by having God for its object and the love of God for its motive. “Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord.” The grace of God is the supreme motive—“I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.” Paul is at his finest in his persuasions. All his severity of argument is laid aside, and a tender wistfulness breathes through his words of personal appeal. It is the love of God revealed in the gift of His Son that he delights to dwell upon. “Who loved me and gave Himself for me,” is the irresistible plea he urges. Christ is the object of all service, His sacrifice the incentive to all devotion. “The love of Christ constraineth us; because

¹ Wordsworth.

we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.”¹ “Now, then,” cries the apostle, “we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” Such a truth could not come into a life without making it different from anything it had been before. So great sacrifice must beget sacrifice. *Noblesse oblige*. Obedience must take the shape of love, and the soul that has been thrilled by the grace of Christ cannot but surrender itself completely to His sway. “Ye are bought with a price,” he writes in 1 Cor. vi. 20, “therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God’s”—an appeal which is repeated in the tenth chapter. “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” A similar idea is expressed in a shorter form when he beseeches the Thessalonians, as a father appealing to his children, to walk worthy of God who hath called them unto His kingdom and glory; while in Colossians i. 10 he utters the same thought in the prayer that “they should walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing.”

From these and other passages we gather that the ultimate and all-embracing motive for the moral life, according to Paul, lies in the gracious call of God and the loving service which such a call demands. Life is a vocation—a call to serve God in a particular way. Heredity, temperament, circumstances, opportunity, all may be factors in shaping the course of our life, but in and through and behind these impersonal agencies—the accidents and chances, as they are so often named—we

¹ 2 Cor. v. 14-16.

are to recognize as Christians the call of God.¹ Throughout the epistles this thought frequently recurs. "As God hath called each so let him walk." "Let each abide in that calling wherein he was called." This special divine vocation is to overrule and subordinate to itself all the various experiences and activities of life. We belong to a holy and merciful God, who has chosen, elected, and determined us to a grand and glorious life, and who has left nothing undone that even almighty love could do to win us. Predestinated, called, justified, glorified—such are the links in the golden chain of redemptive grace by which God has bound us to Himself.² It becomes us, therefore, to consecrate ourselves wholly to God. It is much the same thought which the apostle presents in the 6th chapter of the same epistle, where the ethical life is derived as an obligation arising from the new religious relation which Christ has established between God and man. The new life which has been begun in the Christian through the indwelling Christ, can be no other than moral in correspondence with the nature of the Heavenly Being, "How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"³ "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof . . . for sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."⁴ In the 8th chapter he clinches the argument which he has been working out, viz., that religious privileges involve ethical obligations—by stating the awful alternative involved. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if through the spirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall

¹ Cp. Illingworth, *Christian Character*, p. 109.

² Rom. viii. 30.

³ Rom. vi. 2.

⁴ Rom. vi. 12, 14.

live.”¹ It may be observed that we have here a combination of two motives—the one based upon redemption and the other upon retribution. But these are simply the two sides of the shield, and must always go together. A man cannot reject a high privilege without involving himself in an equally serious penalty. There is a natural law even in the spiritual world. God is not a God of caprice. As the apostle elsewhere says, “He that sows to the flesh, shall of the flesh, in the course of nature, reap corruption. He that soweth to the spirit shall from the spirit reap eternal life.”² It cannot be otherwise. Shall we charge the apostle here with making an appeal to the old legal righteousness of Judaism? We cannot agree with Weinell when he says that “Paul did not perceive that two religious systems here jostle each other, the Jewish religion of rewards and the new religion of redemption.”³ Surely it is no lowering of the high sanction to which he appeals throughout, to remind his converts of the dire consequences of spurning the call of God and quenching the light of life.

This conception of life as a vocation, which is the leading motive of Paul, gives *dignity and stability* to the (i) entire Christian life. It is not, indeed, without its dangers, as Paul shows, being interpreted sometimes in a way to engender fatalism, and sometimes in a way to incite fanaticism. But, as a rule, the sense of life as a mission or calling of God, not only gives to man a definite aim, but encourages perseverance, which is the secret of all fruitful work, and consecrates the conditions of lowliness and pain.⁴

The idea of living to the Lord furthermore stimulates (ii) *sincerity of heart and integrity of character.* Living under

¹ Rom. viii. 12, 13.

² Gal. v. 25.

³ Weinell, *St. Paul*, p. 342.

⁴ Illingworth, *Christian Character*.

"the great taskmaster's eye" constrains us to search our desires and intentions, and "to bring into captivity every thought," as Paul enjoins. It is no formal profession or external observance which he insists upon, but the entire sanctification and devotion of the inner man.

(iii) Not only will this high conception of life, as a vocation of God, encourage inward sincerity of thought, it will also promote *thoroughness and fidelity in work*. Servants are bidden to obey, "not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as unto the Lord." Masters are to rule as "having a master in heaven." This thoroughness will permeate every department and detail of activity. "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all as unto God." For all duty is one, and all distinctions of great or small are lost in the supreme word—"This is the will of the Lord." The worth and quality of an action depends not upon its prominence, but upon its motive; and as love to God becomes the principle and inspiration of our work, the smallest duty, not less than the largest, is filled with infinite value, because it is at once the expression and the vehicle of God's will.

"All service ranks the same with God ;
 If now, as formerly he trod
 Paradise, His presence fills
 Our earth, each only as God wills
 Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
 Are we : there is no last nor first."¹

Akin to the thought of life as a divine vocation is the idea of *divine sonship*, which is frequently employed by the apostle as a plea for holiness of life. He exhorts the Philippians to do all things without murmurings and disputings, that they may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God.² A reference is made to the same high

¹ Browning.

² Phil. ii. 15.

calling of sonship in Romans viii. 14. "For as many as are led by the spirit, they are the sons of God." Delivered from bondage ye have received, he says, the spirit of adoption, and can claim God as your Father. It is to the same motive he appeals when he exhorts the Thessalonians to watch and be sober.¹ For he says, "Ye are children of the light and children of the day." Yours is a high privilege. Ye have been called out of darkness into light. Live and work as those who understand the worth and appreciate the opportunity of the day. This passage suggests also another motive, which frequently finds expression in the epistles of Paul—the *shortness and uncertainty of life*. "The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night," or, as he elsewhere says, "The fashion of the world passeth away," "The Lord is at hand." It was Paul's belief that the present world was speedily to pass away, and he even doubted, at the beginning of his ministry at least, if he and his contemporaries would see death. This thought forms the great background of all the apostle's conception of life; his entire view of duty, as well as his estimate of earthly things, are tinged with the idea that "the time is short." He bids men not bind themselves too closely or too fervently to the affairs of this life, but to fix their hearts upon things which are above. Those who have wives are to be as those who have none, those who are slaves are to remain in their present vocation, those who are Jews are not to envy the condition of Gentiles. Let the Christian sit loosely to all earthly considerations; let him withdraw his gaze from the immediate and the material, and fasten it upon eternity, remembering that his true citizenship is in heaven. "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." At the

¹ 1 Thess. v. 6.

same time, while we cannot fail to detect the constant presence of this thought in Paul's writings, it is to be noted that he never urges it as a reason for indifference or apathy. The brevity of time did not make him less zealous in his missionary labours. On the contrary, it spurred him to greater ardour. And so far from permitting the brevity of life to act as an opiate, or furnish an excuse for dreamy idleness, or fatalistic unconcern, he bids men awake to the truth and solemnity of life, putting on the whole armour of God, so that they may valiantly withstand the world's wiles and conquer its evils. If life is short, then let its days be nobly filled, and if the fashion of the world is passing away, then all the more earnestly must its opportunities and experiences be seized and turned into instruments of our highest good.

But apart from these central thoughts which apply to the general spirit of the new life, it might be shown that Paul deduces a special moral obligation from each separate doctrine. No abstract truth ever remains abstract with Paul. He has always an eye to life and practice, and the most abstruse theological reasonings are sooner or later brought to bear upon the immediate conduct of those whom he is addressing. From the doctrine of Justification he draws the conclusion of the proper use of liberty—not for self-indulgence, but for the service of each other in love.¹ From the doctrine of Redemption he deduces the obligations of consecration. "Ye were bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies."² And so too he bases the claim of brotherly love, not so much upon the principle that all Christians are God's children, as upon the thought of the common possession of Christ, Who makes all believers parts of one

¹ Gal. v. 13.

² 1 Cor. vi. 19.

organism—members of His body, in whose joys and sorrows all alike share—and who thus mutually serve one another.¹

Along with these more abstract motives it is only in harmony with what we might expect from the supreme place which Christ holds in Paul's system of thought, that he should repeatedly present the more personal incentive of the *imitation of Christ*. Christ, as we have already seen, is the Alpha and Omega of Paul's whole conception of the Christian life. He is at once end, norm and motive. He is the inspiration and standard of the Christian character in all its relationships. As we have already pointed out, it is by no mechanical drill into imitation of acts and obedience to commands that Paul seeks to make Christ's example a motive-power in men's lives. It is a spiritual likeness, not an outward artificial conformity, which the apostle everywhere urges. Everyone is so to live as to please his neighbour to edification even as Christ pleased not Himself. In the spirit in which He bore our burdens we are to bear the infirmities of the weak.² Paul does not disdain to bring the great principles which were manifested in the life of Christ to bear upon small duties. Even with regard to such a minute and prosaic detail as the making a collection for the poor he applies the profound law which was exemplified in the incarnation as an ethical pattern. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."³ Above all, it is the humility and sacrifice of the incarnate Christ which the apostle habitually sets forth for imitation. "In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves": "Let this mind be in you

¹ Rom. xii. ; 1 Cor. xii.

² Rom. xv. 1.

³ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

which was also in Christ Jesus, who emptied Himself of His glory and took upon Him the form of a servant.”¹

As Christ is the supreme ideal and motive, so everyone who in any way reflects the image of the Master is also a pattern and plea for the Christian life. With all his humility and self-depreciation Paul knows that the one purpose of his life is to live for Christ, and he does not hesitate therefore in so far as he is a follower of the Master to invite others to be followers of him. “Be ye imitators of me,” he says. “These things, which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me, do.”² He did not of course demand that men should literally copy his life. Who was he any more than Apollos or Cephas, or any other disciple of Christ, that they should set him up as a supreme pattern? He was but an ambassador and witness, a finger-post pointing to Christ. He was a learner like themselves. He was exposed to the same temptations, and he had to exert the same watchfulness lest in preaching to others he might himself be a castaway. There were, moreover, many incidents in his career peculiar to himself which he would have been the last man to wish others to adopt. He was not married, he lived a life of constant turmoil and unrest, travelling from land to land, often without friends, occupation or settled abode. He had infirmities and disadvantages of a special nature which, however they might redound to the glory of God, he could not wish that others should share. He knew how to be abased and how to abound, how to be full and how to be hungry—but in none of these particulars did he desire to make his life a model for others.

It has been remarked that a man who could invite others to imitate his character must indeed have a

¹ Phil. ii. 1-6.

² Phil. iv. 9.

conscience void of offence. Surely Paul more than most men had a right to make the claim he did. In his person manly independence, exalted ardour and singleness of purpose were united to genuine humility and self-forgetful love. For him to live was Christ, yet he did not count himself to have attained. From the beginning to the end, his life was one ceaseless endeavour to know and to do the will of his Master. "This one thing I do, I press towards the mark." If he asked others to be his imitators it was not in the outward accidents and disabilities of his life, but in his inner convictions and aims. He desired for all men what he uttered as he stood with upraised manacled hands before Agrippa—"I would to God that not only thou, but all that hear me this day were, with much or with little persuasion, such as I am—except these bonds."

CHAPTER VII

THE VIRTUES OF THE NEW LIFE

So far we have been content to view in a general way the Pauline conception of the Highest Good, noting that the apostle's ideal of life may be summed up in three great words: Holiness, Christlikeness, and Brotherhood. We have also discussed, on both its divine and human side, the Power or Dynamic by which the ideal is to be realized. Lastly, we have considered the motives or sanctions to which the apostle appeals in commending and enforcing Christian morality. The whole might be concisely summed up in the Pauline formula—"turning from idols to serve the living and true God."¹ "Alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord";² or in one short but pregnant sentence which embraces all the three elements which we have indicated—"Now being made free from sin and become servants of God, ye have your fruits unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."³

But the apostle's genius was of far too practical a kind to be content with general principles. It is never enough to say to a man: "Serve God, be Christlike, seek to live in newness of life with your Risen Lord." And Paul was writing to weak striving mortals who

¹ 1 Thess. i. 9.

² Rom. vi. 11.

³ Rom. vi. 22.

needed much particular instruction and counsel as to how the Christian ideal was to be realized, and in what kind of character it was to be manifested. The good man has to live in the world in contact with evil and in relationship with his fellow-men. He cannot be content therefore to remain a Christian in general. He must be a Christian in particular in all the varied duty and detail of his daily life.

We have to deal therefore in this chapter with the constituents of the Christian personality, or the particular virtues of character in which the ideal is realized.

Had Paul been writing a treatise on Christian ethics, we might have expected him to start from Christ as his standard, and analyzing His life and character into its separate elements, to commend the special graces which were manifested in Jesus. But, as we have seen, the Pauline epistles are not formal expositions, but simply letters which owe their form and contents to the particular circumstances which called them forth; and while the apostle does sometimes allude to the characteristic excellences of Christ, especially to His humility, gentleness, meekness, patience, it is to be remarked that it is but seldom that he refers to the features of Christ's earthly life at all.¹ It may be an exaggeration to say with Weinel² that Paul attached no value whatever to Christ according to the flesh, and that the man Jesus can scarcely be said to have existed for him at all; but it is true that what interested him in Jesus was not so much His earthly life as His present life in the believer; and even when he does hold up His life as an ethical

¹ When he does appeal to the example of Christ it is in connection with commands to unselfishness and renunciation of self-advantage. See Joh. Weiss, *Paul and Jesus*, p. 117.

² *St. Paul*, p. 314.

pattern, the features chosen are such as depend for their deepest significance on the fact that He was the divine Son of God. So His epoch-making death was His "obedience."¹ That His life was without self-pleasing was seen in His vicarious endurance of reproach and suffering.² His great act of love was His giving Himself up to death.³ Paul only once speaks of His gentleness and sweet reasonableness in general, and that in such a way as to suggest that he is alluding to the now living and exalted Lord. The same remark applies to the apostle's references to the love⁴ and truth⁵ of Christ. The only other special incident in the earthly life of Jesus besides His death to which he alludes is the Incarnation, which he sets forth as an example of humility and self-sacrificing love.⁶ Yet even here it may be remarked that the object the apostle has in referring to this act of self-humiliation is not merely to commend the virtue of lowliness but also to exhort his readers to worship the exalted Lord. "For He who humbled Himself hath been exalted, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

We must not suppose, however, that Paul knew nothing of Jesus' earthly life. On the contrary, as Weinel himself acknowledges, his epistles are our best and surest witness in the controversy that has just been started afresh regarding the historicity of the person of Christ. As Paul tells us, he became acquainted with the outlines of the life of Jesus from his immediate disciples themselves, and though his religion is derived from the Risen

¹ Rom. v. 19.

³ Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. v. 14 ff.

⁵ 2 Cor. xi. 10.

² Rom. xv. 3 ff.

⁴ Rom. viii. 35 ff.; 2 Cor. v. 14.

⁶ Phil. ii. 6.

Christ, "yet we find traces everywhere of his acquaintance with these memoirs of Jesus which afterwards assumed a definite shape in our Gospels."¹

If, then, the apostle does not deduce the virtues of the Christian life directly from the character of Jesus, it is probably because Christ is to him rather a divine Power than a human Pattern; and also for the further reason that the Christian virtues are not excellences which can be acquired simply by imitation. They are the *fruits* of the Spirit—consequences which spring directly and spontaneously from the new life of the Risen Christ implanted in the heart of the believer.

But though Paul presents the features of the ethical life in his own way, it must not be overlooked that his whole conception of the essentials of moral character is in harmony with the teaching of Jesus. His idea of virtue is essentially that of Christ, and the virtues which he enumerates are similar to those inculcated in the Sermon on the Mount. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, gentleness, purity." The man who sets forth the features of the moral life in this list of virtues shows clearly that he has learned of Jesus, and that his aim is nothing else than to reveal the mind of the Master. The emphasis is laid where Christ himself laid it—on love. Love is the fulfilment of the law. To serve Christ is to have righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.² It cannot be doubted that there ever hovered before Paul's mind a picture of the man Christ Jesus, the main features of which were gentleness, self-denial, self-sacrifice. Never is his language warmer or more enthusiastic than when he is speaking of the love, unselfishness, and self-abasement of Jesus. And it may be, as has been suggested,

¹ Weinel, *St. Paul*, p. 317.

² Rom. xiv. 18.

that in such passages as Romans xii., where Paul depicts love in all its forms, or in 1 Cor. xiii., where he rises to lyric power in its praise, we have not only echoes of the words of Jesus, but can see the reflection of His personality.¹

The systematic enumeration and development of the virtues has been one of the most difficult, as it is one of the most important, tasks of ethics; and neither in ancient nor in modern times has complete success attended moral philosophers in this respect. Plato's famous classification is obviously too meagre, and as has been said, "serves its purpose only because justice is used to include everything not accounted for by the rest."² Aristotle's list, on the other hand, though fuller, lacks system, and is marred by serious omissions. The list is aristocratic; they are the virtues of a well-born gentleman. Nor is there mention, any more than in Plato's enumeration, of the gentler virtues.

It is, indeed, true that the apostle Paul in no single passage offers a complete description of all the virtues possible to faith. Perhaps the fullest list is that which we have already referred to—the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. v. 22-23. A rich cluster is also mentioned as the fruit of light. "Walk," he says, "as children of the light (for the fruit of light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord." A fuller enumeration is given in Colossians iii. 12-13, where he bids the members of that Church "put on, as God's elect, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other if any man have a complaint against any: even as the Lord forgave you so also do

¹ Joh. Weiss, *Paul and Jesus*, p. 121.

² See Muirhead, *Elements of Ethics*, p. 177.

ye." And to these may be added the oft-quoted series in Philippians iv. 8, "Whatsoever things are true, reverent, just, chaste, lovely, kindly spoken of." These representations do not pretend to systematic completeness. They cross and repeat one another; yet putting them all together we obtain a wonderfully full enumeration of what Paul conceived as the virtues of the Christian man.

In looking a little more closely at the content and import of the Pauline virtues, we may make a threefold classification: First, the classical or heroic virtues, sometimes called the "cardinal" virtues; second, the amiable virtues; and, third, the "theological virtues" or "Christian graces."

I.

The classical virtues. It is not unnatural to ask whether Paul was acquainted with the virtues of antiquity which were taught by the philosophers of his time, and, if so, how far he adopted them in his own teaching. There can be little doubt that he was not only conversant with the so-called pagan virtues, but actually exhorted his readers to the practice of the four cardinal virtues, as they have been called, from *cardo*, a hinge, which were derived from Greek philosophy and were first defined and systematically treated by Plato¹—*σοφία* or wisdom, *ἀνδρεία* or fortitude, *σωφροσύνη* or temperance, and *δικαιοσύνη* or justice. Virtue is defined by Plato as the harmony and health of the soul, while vice is the contrary condition. Socrates had identified all virtue with wisdom, but Plato merely assigns to wisdom the highest place among the virtues, while justice, which he put last, he regards as the sum and harmony of all.

¹ *Rep.* bk. iv.

Paul refers to all these qualities, but he never mentions them all together nor relates them as Plato does in a systematic way.

(1) With regard to *σοφία*, of which Paul treats in the opening chapters of first Corinthians, and to which he alludes in the later epistles of Ephesians and Colossians, as well as in the pastoral letters, it would seem at first sight as if he disparaged it altogether. He knows well the kind of learned jargon and windy conceit which passes for knowledge in the schools, and he will have none of it. He does not hesitate to pronounce the wisdom of men foolishness. The wisdom which Paul had in view was probably the aberrations of the Gnostic philosophy, which even in his day had begun to ally itself with Christianity.

The problem of the origin of Gnosticism is a difficult one; but so much is certain, that it was an eclectic movement, of which Eastern myths and Greek philosophy were dominant factors. The literature of apocalyptic Judaism, and especially the writings of Philo and the Alexandrian Neo-Platonists, were gradually incorporated with it, and made it acceptable to some of the earliest Christian teachers themselves. "The heretics were not a hostile sect as in a subsequent age, but were simply the advanced wing of the Church itself, and participated in the common worship and enterprise."¹ "Paul himself speaks of the Gospel as a higher kind of knowledge. He invests it with the character of a mystery, and distinguishes between the various grades of initiation,² probably communicating to his more advanced disciples an esoteric doctrine which is not fully represented in his writings." The leading feature of early Gnosticism was the emphasis which it placed upon knowledge as the central factor in the religious life. As a consequence of

¹ Scott, *The Apologetic of the New Test.* p. 153.

² 1 Cor. ii. 1-6.

this insistence on knowledge, a distinction was made between "two classes of men—the spiritual, who were capable of the higher wisdom, and the psychical, or lower, natures." Moreover, a contrast was established between the higher super-sensible world and the lower or material, "and redemption consisted in passing from the world of darkness into the world of light." The practical effect of this separation was a morbid view of the bodily life as a thing to be suppressed, or even to be indulged, according to the status of the spiritual man. Christ, the Logos, who came into the world to manifest God and deliver man, could enter into no real contact with human life. His bodily appearance, his temptations, sufferings, and death were illusory, a kind of allegory or symbol which represented the conflict between the world of darkness and light.¹ Though the systematic elaboration of these ideas did not reach a climax till the second century, their dangerous tendency was early suspected. Even in the epistle to the Corinthians it is obvious that Paul is controverting the exaggerated estimate which philosophers had put upon wisdom. In the epistle to the Colossians, written towards the close of his life, his opposition to such teaching is still more marked, and in the epistle to Timothy² there is a direct allusion to "γνῶσις falsely so called." Elsewhere there are general references to "false teachings" which imply that the Gnostic movement within the Church had already become sufficiently prominent to call for protest.

But it was false or inadequate wisdom which Paul disparaged. He had a high regard for true σοφία, and these early chapters in Corinthians are an exposition of it. That which distinguishes Christianity from all past

¹ Scott, *The Apologetic of the New Test.* pp. 152, 155 ff.

² 1 Tim. vi. 20.

theories of wisdom is that it presents to men not so much a new truth to be apprehended as a Person to be relied on. Divine wisdom is not therefore on a level with human philosophies, nor is it of similar origin. It is not just one more added to the attempts of man to define truth. Paul is most anxious that he should not be regarded as the expounder of a rival speculative system. It is a Life not a philosophy which he proclaims, nor is the wisdom he declares derived by the ingenuity of man. It is a disclosure made by God of knowledge unattainable by human endeavour. According to Plato wisdom was the virtue of philosophers alone,¹ and according to the Gnostics only the initiated could fully understand it. But the wisdom which Paul extolled was for all men. It depended not on exceptional ability to see truth, but upon the spirit which God bestowed upon all who sought Him. It comes from God and is given in and through Christ: "Of God *He* is made unto you wisdom."

But it is not only intellectual pride and the contempt of others which an over-estimate of knowledge engenders that Paul inveighs against. He condemns the practical consequences in the lives of its adherents to which such false doctrine leads. They are "lovers of their own selves, boasters, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy."² They profess that they know God but in their works they deny Him.³ They forbid to marry, observe strict rules concerning meat and drink, teaching such maxims as "touch not, taste not, handle not."⁴ Such teaching led to a morbid, if not a vicious view of life. As against such false tendencies Paul laid down the true Christian principle that "every

¹ See Plato, *Meno and Phaedo*.

³ Titus i. 16.

² 2 Tim. iii. 2.

⁴ Col. ii. 21.

creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving."¹ Wisdom, then, according to the apostle does not mean intellectual skill in propounding a theory of the world, but the possession of a mind or heart for the right interpretation of the things of God. It is a divine gift which comes from above. Only the spiritual, indeed, can discern the things of the spirit, but spiritual-mindedness is not the prerogative of an intellectual *élite* or a specially enlightened clique. "God will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth." Christ has died for all, His message therefore must appeal not to the higher intelligence of the few but to something which is common to all men.² The apostle's prayer for the Colossians, therefore, is that they may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.³

(2) *Fortitude* or courage, according to Plato, is necessary for a life of morality, and its task is to defend the rational intelligence against the attacks of sensual desires. Valour is a dominant virtue of the ancients, but it is worthy of note that it is not merely physical courage which Plato extols. What he calls courage does not consist only in a contempt of death and fortitude in danger, but more especially in the maintenance of a right attitude to good and evil.⁴

In writing to Timothy the apostle gives to the virtue of courage its more general sense of bravery—the determination not to be ashamed of bearing testimony, and readiness to suffer hardship for the sake of the Gospel.

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 4.

² Cp. Scott, *Apologetic of the New Testament*, p. 169.

³ Col. i. 9.

⁴ See Ritter, *Ancient Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 410; also Plato's *Republic*, book iv.

"For God," he says, "gave us not the spirit of fearfulness or cowardice (δειλία), but of power and love and discipline."¹ Though Paul does not expressly commend courage in any other passage, we may gather from the tenor of his own life that it occupied a high place in his esteem. While he made no parade of his sufferings his life was a continual battle for the Gospel. His career as an apostle begins in one supreme act of moral courage, and right on to the end it is his heroism of spirit that strikes us most in his life. Wherever we find him, amidst friends or foes, separating from Silas because of his refusal to take Mark as a fellow-traveller, withstanding Peter to the face, preaching the Gospel in the cities of Asia and Greece amid many adversaries, in perils by land and sea, standing before the governor at Caesarea, giving directions upon the deck of the foundering ship on the voyage to Italy, or awaiting his doom in the Mamertime prison at Rome—it is the same brave, heroic, undaunted man we see.² His courage is none the less that it is not evinced in the warfare of the battlefield, but in suffering for the Gospel's sake. What he himself is he would have others to be. "You are now," he writes to the Philippians, "engaged in the same struggle which you saw in me, and which you hear I am still maintaining."³ He regards life as a battle. It becomes us to quit ourselves as men, to be strong, to put on the whole armour of God.

(3) *Temperance* or self-control—which, according to Plato, directs itself to the sensual impulses, and is regarded by him as that quality of the virtuous man which enables him to reduce his desires within proper bounds, guarding them from excess and from defect—is a virtue which

¹ 2 Tim. i. 7.

² Jackson, *Expositor*, vol. xi. p. 205.

³ Phil. i. 27-30.

holds an important place in Paul's teaching. Among the fruits of the Spirit it appears at the end of the list as a kind of climax.¹ The word used here is not *σωφροσύνη* but *ἐγκράτεια* or self-control, although *σωφροσύνη* or sobriety is mentioned along with justice and godliness in Titus ii. 12 as making up the threefold requirement of morality. It is one of the qualities required of a bishop (Titus i. 6). It is inculcated by the example of the zealous athlete (1 Cor. ix. 25). In regard to this virtue we may see how the ethical ideas of the apostle differed from the views of contemporary Greek writers. According to the Greek conception the material side of man was not an actual element in virtuous action. It called for suppression, not control. The Christian virtue, on the other hand, does not imply that the physical nature of man is an evil to be crushed or a foe to be conquered, but rather an element which is to be disciplined and brought into proper relation to the whole of life. Though in Galatians v. 23 Paul inculcates temperance in antithesis to "drunkenness and revellings," which close the list of the "works of the flesh," the word includes much more than the avoidance of strong drink, as it is too often narrowed down to signify in modern times. It covers the whole range of moral discipline, and has to do with every sense and passion of human nature. Temperance is the practised mastery of self. It means the control of hand, foot, eye, tongue, temper, tastes, and affections. "He is the temperate man, according to the apostle, who holds himself well in hand, who meets temptation as a disciplined army, meets the shock of battle, by skill and alertness and temperate courage, baffling the forces that threaten it."² This virtue in a Christian is exercised not for himself alone. He knows

¹ Gal. v. 33.

² Findlay, *Expositor's Bible*, Epistle to Galatians, p. 388.

what great issues hang on his personal faithfulness. But he knows also, even if he be a Paul, that only through self-mastery can he save his own soul alive. "I keep my body under," says the apostle, "I make it my slave not my master, lest having preached to others I myself should be a castaway."

(4) *Justice* in the Pauline use of the term has scarcely the same connotation as with Plato. As used by the Greek philosopher it does not simply mean the virtue of rendering to all their due, but stands rather for the harmonious development of the inner man by means of which each faculty of the soul, without interfering with the others, performs its due functions and thereby produces within him complete and perfect order.¹ The place which Plato assigns to justice in the hierarchy of the virtues, Paul gives to love, and when he refers to justice it is in its more limited sense of equity or duty to others. On the whole, however, justice in its ethical, as distinguished from its theological use, is a word not frequently employed by the apostle. It may be regarded as more distinctively an Old Testament requirement. It is not indeed superseded in the New Testament. Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil, and therefore every Old Testament attribute is taken up and deepened by the Gospel. Justice, as righteousness forms the solid substratum of moral character both in God and man, but mercy lifts it to a higher power. "He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law."²

II.

The amiable virtues. If this were all that Paul had to teach with regard to the moral life, the apostle would

¹ See Plato, *Rep.* book iv.

² Rom. xiii. 10.

have little claim to originality, and there would be some ground for the statement of Huxley and others, that there was comparatively little difference between the ethical principles of Christianity and those of the best pagan philosophers. But the most superficial reader of the Pauline epistles is at once conscious that the so-called cardinal virtues do not exhaust the apostle's list, nor do they represent those that are most characteristic of his teaching. "It is well," we could fancy Paul saying, "to have the pagan virtues, nay, it is indispensable, to be wise and brave, temperate and just,—even the heathen acknowledge as much—but more is demanded of the disciple of Christ. Humility is required not less than courage; love not less than justice; patience as well as temperance; faith and hope as much as wisdom and knowledge." But these other virtues are not to be added on merely to the pagan virtues, or even incorporated with them. They are the distinctive elements of the Christian character which give a new meaning and value to those which were already in vogue. All virtue, in other words, has a higher worth for the Christian, and even those which obtained in the heathen world are baptized with a new spirit and are clothed with a new beauty as the fruits of faith. It has been truly said that Christianity so profoundly modified the character of the moral conceptions which it took over from the past, that they became largely new creations. The order and proportion of the virtues were changed, "The old moral currency was still kept in circulation, but it was gradually minted anew."¹ Fortitude is still the cool and steady behaviour of a man in the presence of danger, but its range is widened by the inclusion of dangers to the soul as well as the body; it is the bravery

¹ Strong, *Christian Ethics*, p. 141.

of the man who dwells in a spiritual world. Temperance is still the control of the physical passions; but it is also the right placing of our affections and the consecration of our appetites to nobler ends. Justice is still the absence of all self-seeking, the suppression of conflict with the rights of others; but the source of it lies in giving God the love and adoration which are His due. Prudence is still the practical moral sense which chooses the right course of action; but it is the prudence of men who are pilgrims towards a country where the object of their love is to be found.¹

If we compare the qualities of character which Paul commends with those which were current in the old world, the contrast is startling and significant. While Plato lays stress on the intellectual and heroic features, Paul brings into the foreground what may be called the gentler virtues. Two reasons may have induced the apostle to this preference. First, he may have specially dwelt upon the self-effacing side of character as a protest against the spirit of militarism and worship of physical power, which were prevalent in the ancient world. Though he does not disparage fortitude, as we have seen, yet he would remind his converts that physical courage is not the only excellence, and that indeed heroism may be shown as much by patience and forgiveness, as by retaliation and self-assertion. A second reason probably was that the gentler self-sacrificing virtues more truly express the spirit of Christ. The one element in all these virtues commended by Paul is the element of sacrifice, of self-effacing love—that which is of the very essence of the Gospel—that attribute of God which the Saviour manifested in His death. If we are to learn of Him who was meek and

¹Strong, *Christian Ethics*, p. 141.

lowly, then surely the distinguishing mark of our character must be that love which seeketh not its own.

Reserving consideration of love till we come to deal with the special Christian graces, there are three prominent types of the amiable or self-effacing virtues which the apostle mentions as flowing from it.

(1) Humility (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*), lowliness of mind. It is the first exercise of love, and next to it the most characteristic grace of the man who has come to know God and himself as a sinner in the light of God's holiness. It is essentially a religious virtue, and betokens a man's attitude to God rather than to his fellow-men. It does not consist in false demerit or meanness.

To be poor in spirit is not to be poor-spirited. In nothing is the whole temper of Christianity as compared with Greek conceptions of worth more truly disclosed than in the prominence which it gives to this quality. In Greek Philosophy it was regarded as a vice rather than a virtue. It was the magnanimous man, the man of arrogant spirit who was admired. The classical ideal was based on the greatness of man: the Christian on the goodness of God. All supercilious pride and vaunting ambition are laid low in the man who has seen the grace of God in Christ. Contrite, chastened, submissive, he forgets himself as he gazes in wonder and adoration on the image of divine love. But humility is not a barren emotion which paralyzes the resolves of the will. There is courage even in humility, and it takes a great man to be modest. Lowliness of self manifests itself in the service of others. Indeed, humility is not so much a separate virtue as a quality which gives tone to the Christian character, and is therefore the common stamp set upon every excellence. Humility, which has its root in faith and love, issues in the

possession of peace, which becomes again the ground of all Christian joy.¹ The man whom grace has humbled cannot be a dull or peevish man. One with Christ he shares His peace and tastes His joy—a joy which, as Paul himself well knew, earthly sorrow cannot quench. “Sorrowful yet always rejoicing.” Thus, with the consciousness of the nothingness of all that a man can be or effect by his own power, Paul combines the elevating sense of what a man is and achieves through Christ. In this we see the unity and uniqueness of Pauline ethics. The virtues merge and shade into each other. Let a man begin with humility, the proper attitude to God, and he rises step by step to the full realization of the blessedness of eternal life in Christ.

(2) Closely allied to humility is meekness, *πραῦτης*, and its sister, long-suffering (*μακροθυμία*),—the attitude of the Christian in the presence of suffering and wrongdoing. With these may be connected contentment (*αὐτάρκεια*), which makes a man independent of external circumstances, not however to be identified with stoic apathy—“I have learned in whatsoever state I am therein to be content”; and *ὑπομόνη*, patience, which indicates not merely endurance but also perseverance; and *ἐπιείκεια*, which is sometimes translated “clemency,” sometimes “moderation,” and sometimes “forbearance.” “Let your moderation be known unto all men”—which means behave gently, kindly, considerately, making allowances, not insisting on your pound of flesh.

Just as humility is not poor-spiritedness, so meekness is not tameness nor cringing servility. It is self-suppression in view of the claims of others, and may consist with the highest courage.

(3) Lastly, we may mention the virtue of *forgiveness*.

¹ Gal. v. 23.

It is not enough to be humble, or to be meek and patient; we have a duty to wrongdoers. We must not only bear but forbear, not only forget but forgive. It is not enough to refrain from rendering evil for evil; we are to follow after that which is good. "Bless them that curse you."¹ "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."²

III.

The *Christian graces* or "theological virtues." "Now abideth faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love." Some have been content to see in these three graces the summary of Christian excellences. Neander works out the whole ethical system of Paul from these three heads alone.³ Others have made them the triple basis upon which the whole edifice of Paul's theology is built.⁴ Faith points to God, love to man, and hope to the life beyond.⁵ Attractive as such generalizations are they are fanciful and defective. These graces cannot be separated from one another and made to represent different divisions of life. Man is not made in water-tight compartments. Nor can he exercise at one time faith, at another love, and at another hope. They are all of a piece. He who has faith has also love, and he who has faith and love is not devoid of hope. We may regard the threefold excellence as at once the root and the fruit of the Christian character—its basis and crown.

¹ Rom. xii. 20.

² Eph. iv. 32.

³ Neander, *Planting of Christianity*, p. 480.

⁴ Ernesti.

⁵ "Faith founded the Church, hope sustained it. I cannot help thinking it is reserved to love to reform it." Prothero, *Life of Dean Stanley*, vol. i. p. 302.

Love is the first and last word of apostolic Christianity. In the New Testament even faith itself is not more constantly used. No other term is so expressive of the spirit of Christ. Even the apostle John, who has been named the apostle of love, does not surpass Paul in his praise of this quality. In the celebrated hymn of love, unparalleled for beauty in all literature, he proclaims the pre-eminence and permanence of this grace. "Now abideth faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love."

Love was practically unknown in the ancient world. *ἔρως*, the sensuous instinct or passion, and *φιλία*, the bond of friendship, did exist. But *ἀγάπη*, love in its highest sense, was the discovery and creation of the Gospel. Pre-Christian philosophy exalted the intellect, but left the heart cold and vacant. It was reserved for the followers of Jesus to teach men the meaning of charity and to find in it the law of freedom.

In the ethics of Paul, as in Christ's own teaching, love is primal and central. It is the virtue in which all the others have their setting. And thus, though the various lists which the apostle gives us may seem wanting in system and formal connection, they have a deep underlying unity and coherence. All have this in common, that they spring directly from love, and are manifestations of it. "Love is the bond of perfectness."¹ It is the golden thread upon which all the pearls are strung. The several virtues are but facets of one rich and manifold gem.

Love, says Paul, is indispensable to a true Christian character. Without this no profession of faith, no practice of good deeds has any value in the sight of God. Though I have all other gifts and merits—the knowledge of all mystery, the enthusiasm of ecstatic

¹ Col. iii. 14.

feeling, the sublimest heroism of courage, the most self-denying sacrifice—all are nothing without love. Without it enthusiasm becomes an empty play of feeling, knowledge a mere intellectual parade, courage a boastful confidence, self-denial a useless asceticism. Love is the fruitful source of all else that is beautiful and noble in life.¹ It imbues the entire character, and contains in itself the motive of all Christian conduct. It not only embraces but produces all the other graces. It creates courage. It begets wisdom. It brings forth self-restraint and temperance. It manifests itself in humility, meekness, and forgiveness.

“As every lovely hue is light
So every grace is love.”

Love is the *enduring* virtue. Paul associates with it faith and hope. Indeed, the close connection of these qualities is so remarkable that it has been suggested that Paul's combination of them may have had its basis in some lost word of Christ Himself.² Are faith and hope, then, to be regarded as virtues of the same kind as love, only inferior? We have already seen the place which faith occupies in the teaching of the apostle. It is the formative and appropriating power by which man receives and makes his own the Spirit of Christ. Faith is the practical principle from which is to be deduced the whole Christian life. But it works through love, and finds in the activity of love its outlet and exercise. As all the actions of the believer may be traced back to the “work of faith,” so likewise they may be referred to

¹ “Show me what thou truly lovest. This love is the root and central part of thy being. What thou lovest is what thou livest.” Fichte, *Reden*.

Harnack, *Texte ü Untersuchungen*, vol. v. and vol. xiv.

the "labour of love." We may say that love is the material, and faith the principle of Christian virtue. Character is formed by faith: it lives in love. The two belong as condition and completion to the same virtue.¹

And the same may be said of hope. It is a particular form of faith which looks forward to a life that is to be perfectly developed and completed in the future. The man of hope knows in whom he trusts, and he anticipates with assurance the fulfilment of his longings. Christian hope is not the complacency of shallow optimism. It recognizes the reality of evil. It does not conceal from itself the significance of sin in this world, and its awful consequences in the next. But confident in the mercy of God, in spite of the world's trial and sorrow, it does not hesitate to look forward to the gradual realization of the divine purpose and the final triumph of good over evil. Hope is faith turned to the future—a vision inspired and sustained by love.

The superiority of love is due to the fact that it is the quality which gives their value both to faith and hope. It is the manifestation of the one: it is the inspiration of the other. Faith and hope designate but single phases of our relation to God, and therefore represent but partially the significance of the ethical life. But love is the moral completeness, embracing in its scope our duties both to God and man. Faith is unreal without love; love a mere sentiment without faith and hope. If Paul is the apostle of faith, he is also the champion of hope; and he is both because he is the messenger of love. The Christian is a man of faith, love and hope.² He looks upwards, outwards and

¹ Newman Smyth, *Christian Ethics*, p. 225.

² "Love, hope, fear, faith—these make humanity. These are its sign and note and character." Browning, *Paracelsus*.

onwards. His horizon is bounded by neither space nor time; and Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of hope, because it is the religion of love. These virtues have a universal sphere. They embrace all men. From the Pauline point of view there is absolute value attaching to every individual. Every man who comes within the range of Christ's sacrifice has a personal worth, and is important enough despite his outward circumstances to have a place in the scheme of redemption. The old barriers of country and caste which separated men in the ancient world are broken down by the faith in God and the hope for man which love inspires.

Faith, hope, and love are usually styled in contradistinction to the cardinal, "theological virtues." But if they are to be called virtues at all, it must be in a different sense from what the ancients understood by virtue. These apostolic graces are not innate or constitutional elements of the natural man, but states which come into being through a changed moral character. They connect man with God, and with a new spiritual order, in which his life has come to find its place and purpose. They were impossible for a Greek, and had no existence in ancient ethics. They are related to the new ideal which the Gospel has revealed, and obtain their value as elements of character from the fact that they have their object in the great distinctive truth of Christianity—fellowship with God through Christ—a union which is begun in this life, but only consummated in the life to come.

These three graces are not merely outward adornments of character, or optional accomplishments added to life. They are, as we have seen, the essential conditions of the Christian man. They constitute his inmost and necessary character. They do not, indeed, supersede or render

the other virtues superfluous. But as we have already observed, they transmute and transfigure them, giving to them at once their value and their coherence.

Both in this life and that which is to come, faith, hope, and love abide. We cannot conceive of a time when even faith and hope shall cease. They, not less than love, must be abiding elements of the perfect state. But love is pre-eminent in this—that while new objects of trust and desire will come into sight in the widening visions of the eternal life, they shall bring to us no higher or better blessing than love itself.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROGRESSIVENESS OF THE NEW LIFE

WHAT has been already said of Paul's conception of faith as the faculty of gradual appropriation in the moral life, might seem to render unnecessary any separate treatment of the subject of this chapter. Faith, as we have seen, is necessary not only at the beginning, but also at each subsequent stage of the Christian career. It is the free act of man, by which he accepts the life of Christ, and also continues to walk in it. It was, however, only in a passing way that this aspect of the new life was touched; and it will be well, not only for the sake of clearness, but also to combat certain false and one-sided inferences that have been drawn from the apostle's teaching, to examine how far the idea of growth and development is recognized by Paul. We shall therefore, in this chapter, consider, first some of the salient passages in which this idea is presented or implied, in order to show in what form the progress of the new life discloses itself, and next we shall speak of the special aids by which, according to the apostle, progress is to be achieved.

I.

1. *The idea of growth.* In all systems of ethics, both ancient and modern, the evolution of the moral life is a

fundamental idea. No man is virtuous all at once. The realization of the ideal is not an act, but a process. This is the meaning of Plato's famous figure of the charioteer and his winged horses, one of which is noble and the other of ignoble origin. The noble element or soul is striving continually to mount heavenwards, but the lower element or the body is ever dragging it down to earth. So there is a constant conflict, and only partially and gradually is the ideal life attained. Aristotle, even more explicitly than Plato, represents the moral life as a growth to be achieved through practice, and perfected by habit. The Stoics, indeed, present the only exception to this common agreement among ethical thinkers. They alone refused to make allowance for the weakness of human nature, or to admit of a gradual progress towards virtue. The wise man became wise by sudden conversion, and man was either perfect or the reverse. But as time went on, and as it was seen how rare a phenomenon the wise man was, the later Stoics were led to make concessions, and to allow that, after all, there are various grades of attainment, and that pleasure and pain are not absolutes, but may be steps towards a higher good. Turning to Christianity, it might seem that here also there was no room for progress. Conversion is a complete renewal of life, and the man who is regenerated has made an entire break with the past, and has entered upon a state of perfection in which sin is no longer possible.

There are innumerable passages in the New Testament, particularly in the epistles of St. Paul, in which the distinction between the old and the new life is strongly emphasized, and a decisive transition out of complete darkness into light is implied. Paul says if any man is in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed

away; all things are become new.¹ It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me.² In this passage and others of a like nature the idea is that of a sheer division, a complete revolution of the innermost nature, so that the man who is in Christ, and dominated by the Holy Spirit, is completely lifted out of the realm of weakness, and is no longer subject to the infirmities and imperfections of the natural man. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."³ But a closer study of the New Testament modifies this first impression. Not only do we find that change of mind or conversion is required of those who are already within the Church, and have been there for a long time (and such words as "sanctify," "renew," "enlighten," "put on Christ," are employed in a quite similar way, both of a decisive turning-point and of a repeated turning again to the truly "good"), but also the very man who uttered that enthusiastic confession—"old things are passed away"—is also the man who reminds us that he has "not already attained or is already perfect." It might appear that the only way to get over this seemingly irreconcilable contradiction was to deny one or other of the truths, and this is exactly what has been attempted in the history of Christian ethics.⁴ A certain type of perfectionists sees previously to conversion nothing but darkness, and after conversion no real sin. The rationalistic school, on the other hand, does not recognize such a thing as regeneration at all, and regards what is called conversion as only a gradual evolution of the good. But neither of these solutions is in harmony with the general teaching of the New Testament. Our Lord distinctly states that

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17.² Gal. ii. 20.³ Rom. viii. 2.⁴ See Haering, *Ethics of Christian Life* (Trans.), p. 202.

a man must be born again: but in the parable of the ripening corn he no less decisively teaches the idea of growth. It must be admitted, as Prof. Bruce points out,¹ that we do not find in the Pauline epistles a similarly clear conception of the law of growth. At the same time it would be a mistake to say that St. Paul held the view that the Christian life springs into complete maturity and perfection at the very first. While there are passages, as we have seen, which favour that view, there is a greater number implying growth and advancement in holiness. Whatever his ideal might be, Paul was well aware that both in his own case and in that of his converts, the reality fell far short. He frankly admits that he himself had not attained. Constant struggle after the good was necessary. His letters to the churches are full of exhortations, encouragements, and reproaches, suggesting the idea that the new life is at first an immature imperfect thing, capable of improvement, and involving repeated effort. If he did invest the beginning of the new life with an ideal significance, representing it as a complete break with the past, a dying to sin and a resurrection to a new state, a prolonged experience of human nature taught the apostle to cherish moderate expectations in reference to beginners, and to recognize that, whatever it ought to be, the divine life is not, in fact, a complete and finished product, but a process, a gradual sanctification.² On the whole, the view which harmonizes with experience and with Paul's teaching is that the change is a qualitative and not a quantitative one. It does not concern the whole compass of the moral life. The inner inclination of the soul is different; the heart is renewed. There is a new

¹ *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p. 351.

² Bruce, *Ibid.* p. 352.

personality, a "new man," which now truly desires "the good," and strives to realize it. But this "new man" is not at the commencement a complete man. He has the incentive and moral power essential to growth, but he must grow from the very first. The seed is implanted, and in one sense the seed contains within it the whole of what it is yet to be. But in another sense the seed can only maintain itself in life by unfolding and expanding the energies which are potentially within its bosom. Not completion but

"Progress is
The law of life, man is not man as yet,
But in completed man begins anew
A tendency to God."¹

The spiritual element can only gradually spread its influence through all the powers and over all the departments of life. Those who are dead to sin are under the obligation to destroy the individual sinful impulses and allow the spiritual life to have free course, and so dominate gradually the body and its members. The more profoundly the changed person recognizes his sinfulness the more matured become his convictions that to live the new life requires daily endeavour and unremitting combat with his lower self.

"Then life is—to wake and not to sleep,
Rise and not rest, but press
From earth's level, where blindly creep
Things perfected more or less
To the heaven's height far and steep."²

2. This idea of gradual sanctification is supported by many passages in the epistles of St. Paul. Although he does not actually employ the words of St. Peter, "grow

¹ Browning, *Paracelsus*.

² Browning, *Reverie*.

in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ," he represents the aim of the believer "to grow up unto Christ in all things,"¹ and he implies the idea of growth in the expression "rooted in love,"² where the comparison of the Christian life to a tree planted in a good soil and growing to full maturity is suggested. The same idea is implied in the frequent use of the word *κάρπος*.³ The fruit of the spirit is contrasted with the works of the flesh, and the idea is that both time and care are required for fruit to mature. The comparison of the Church to the human body growing up to the stature of manhood is suggestive of organic growth.⁴ In the epistle to the Galatians v. 5, we have by implication the notion of growth in so far as the Christian is represented as waiting for the hope of righteousness. In 1 Cor. iii. 2 the apostle describes the members of the Church as *νήπιοι*, babes whom he can only feed with milk and not yet with meat appropriate to a more advanced condition of faith. In 2 Cor. iv. 16 the idea of daily renewal is expressed, "although the outer man perish yet the inner man is renewed day by day." And the same thought is suggested in Col. iii. 9-11. The change from the "old man" to the "new," though radical and complete, is nevertheless a gradual one. The "new man," says the apostle "*is being* renewed unto knowledge." This is one of the instances⁵ where minute accuracy in translation is a clear gain. When we say with the authorised version "is renewed," we speak of a completed act; but when we say with the revised version "is being renewed," we speak of a continuous process, which is undoubtedly the idea of the apostle. The growth of the "new man" is

¹ Ephes. iv. 15.

² Phil. iii. 18.

³ Gal. v. 22, Rom. vi. 22.

⁴ Ephes. iv. 11-15.

⁵ Maclaren, *Epistle to Coloss.* p. 296.

constant, perhaps slow and difficult to discern. But like all habits and powers in exercise it steadily increases. A similar process works to opposite results in the "old man," which, as Paul says, in the instructive parallel passage in Ephesians,¹ "waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit." The great change which the apostle describes as "a putting off of the old man" and a "putting on of the new," though taking place in the inmost nature wheresoever a heart turns to Christ, needs to be inwrought into character, and to be wrought out in conduct. The "old man" dies hard and the sacrifice has to be repeated from hour to hour; the "new man" has to be put on afresh from day to day. The teaching of the apostle is that the Christian is to advance in holiness and carry out in detail what he has already done in principle.

The apostle declares that the new man is being renewed "after the image of Him who created him." That is to say, there is a gradual rediscovery of man's lost or dimmed likeness to God. Man is still the image of God, though the image has been sadly darkened and partially effaced by sin. But the image of God, which the new man bears from the beginning in a rudimentary form, is continually imprinting itself more deeply upon him, and he is gradually becoming more and more like to Him in whose image he was originally created. This is the ultimate purpose of God in all His self-revelation. This is the will of God, even your sanctification.² The same idea of a gradual reproduction of the likeness of Christ is suggested in 2 Cor. iii. 18, where the apostle represents the Christian as undergoing a transformation through the contemplation of the glory of Jesus Christ. "We are being changed into the same image from glory to

¹ Eph. iv. 22.

² Thess. iv. 3.

glory.”¹ The present tense implies a process continually going on, while the expression “from glory to glory” points to a steady gradual advance in likeness.

But it is in the epistle to the Romans that we find the conception of growth most clearly indicated. This is all the more remarkable, as it is in this same epistle that the idea of the Christian life as a finished product is also most prominent. Here sanctification is described both negatively and positively as a gradual purification from the corruptions of the flesh, and as a gradual appropriation of the fruits of the spirit. In Rom. vi. 14 the apostle says, “Sin shall not *reign* over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace.” This statement implies, if it does not actually express, a doctrine of gradual sanctification.² Sin, dethroned, may still attempt to regain its lost sovereignty, and may continue to give trouble. In verse 19 the apostle writes, “As ye have yielded your members to uncleanness, even so now present your members servants to righteousness unto sanctification”; and in verse 22, “But now being made free from sin and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life.” The Christian is under a new rule, which is gradually to become effective through daily obedience and service. The metaphor of “fruit” suggests gradual ripening in holiness; while “the end which is life eternal” points to a consummation to be attained after a certain lapse of time.

In Romans vii. 24 ff. the struggle between the flesh and the spirit is depicted, while in Romans viii., from verse 12 onwards, the gradual conquest of grace over sin and the final deliverance from corruption into the liberty

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

² See Bruce, *St. Paul's Conception of Christ*, p. 356.

of sonship is described.¹ In Romans xii. 2 the exhortation occurs, "Be ye not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed in the renewal of the mind, to the effect of your proving what is the will of God." This transformation of character, and this proving of the divine will, imply a progressive achievement in which the life is brought more and more into conformity with the knowledge of God's will. A process of growth is also implied in chapter v. 3, "We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience probation, and probation hope." These experiences are successive stages of the spiritual life. It requires not only time and thought, but also the discipline of suffering to develop the graces of patience, self-reliance, and calm assurance, which are only the possession of the man who has been matured through trial.²

In harmony with the other writers of the New Testament, it may thus be seen that St. Paul represents sanctification as the carrying on of the divine life toward perfection. It does not mean perfection reached, but the progress of the Christian man to ever higher stages of holiness. It is, in a word, the gradual Christianising of the Christian.

3. This work of sanctification is presented by the apostle both on its divine and human side. The inner life is not merely human, it is *divine*, both as to the origin from which it is derived and the source from which it is perpetually maintained. The distinctiveness of the Christian life consists in the indwelling of the living God

¹ See also 2 Cor. vii. 1, Gal. v. 4, 1 Cor. x. 12, where a similar triumph is expressed.

² "Life is probation, and earth no goal

But starting point of man, compel him strive,
Which means in man as good as reach the goal."

Browning.

within the heart as a guiding and purifying spirit. Hence sanctification, or advance in holiness, is frequently spoken of by the apostle as a divine act. God, who hath begun a good work in us in Christ through the Spirit must also finish it. In Col. i. 12 he gives "thanks unto God, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the saints in light"; and in 2 Thess. ii. 13 he writes, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit"; and in Col. i. 9 ff. he prays that the Colossians "may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, that they may walk worthily of the Lord, bearing fruit in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of God, and strengthened with all power according to the light of His glory."

But the work of God requires also the activity and co-operation of man, and therefore this progressive sanctification is frequently presented by the apostle as a *human* act. It is God indeed "who worketh in us both to will and to do," but we must "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling."¹ From this point of view the *ἀγιασμός* is regarded as a striving on man's part, partly to *maintain* and partly to *advance* the new-given life.

(1) The effort to *maintain* or guard the life is characterized as "a standing fast in Christ";² as "a continuing in faith, and love, and holiness";³ as a constant "exercise to maintain a conscience void of offence";⁴ as a vigilance lest we fall,⁵ "so that we walk circumspectly."⁶

(2) The effort to *advance* the new life is generally described as an act of self-purification by means of constant self-denying surrender to the will of God.⁷

¹ Phil. ii. 12.² Phil. iv. 1.³ 1 Tim. ii. 18.⁴ Acts xxiv. 16.⁵ 1 Cor. x. 12.⁶ Eph. v. 15.⁷ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

"Cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God," and still more positively as a pressing towards the goal.¹

In particular this effort is presented by the apostle as a striving for *maturity* both in knowledge and conduct.

(a) As a striving after maturity in *knowledge*—Paul writes to the Corinthians² "Be not children in *mind*: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be ye men"; to the Colossians³ he writes, "Being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the *knowledge* of God"; and to the Ephesians he gives the exhortation, "Walk as children of light, proving what is acceptable unto God . . . be not unwise, but *understanding* what the will of the Lord is."⁴ He desires that the Colossians may advance unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they *may know* the mystery of God, even Christ in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden."⁵ "Let no man deceive himself," he writes to the Corinthians. "If any man thinketh that he is wise among you in this world, let him become a fool, that he may *be wise*."⁶ "Beware," he says to the Colossians "lest any spoil you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men and not after Christ,"⁷ and in general he exhorts the Galatians not be entangled again in the yoke of bondage, but to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free.⁸

(b) Striving for maturity of *action* consists in making the Christ who is the power of God the dominating force of our lives, so that we may walk worthy of the Lord in all well-pleasing. It means striving for "self-mastery," in virtue of which the body is to be made our servant

¹ Phil. iii. 14.

² 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

³ Col. i. 10.

⁴ Eph. v. 8, 10, 17.

⁵ Col. ii. 2-3.

⁶ 1 Cor. iii. 18.

⁷ Col. ii. 8.

⁸ Gal. v. 1.

(2 Tim. i. 7); for "sobriety" in all things (2 Tim. iv. 5); for "chastity," so that a man may not commit fornication, sinning against his own body (1 Cor. vi. 18); for self-restraint (Phil. iv. 12); and for courage, humility and perseverance (1 Cor. ix. 16-27; 2 Cor. iv. 7, 18; xi. 21-30).

The maintenance and furtherance of the new life viewed on its human side are more particularly portrayed by the apostle under various well-known figures drawn from the everyday life around him, which doubtless appealed vividly to the imagination of his Gentile converts. He compares the life of the Christian now to a warfare (2 Tim. iv. 7), now to a race (1 Cor. ix. 24), now to a boxing-contest (1 Cor. ix. 26).

(1) That Paul regarded the Christian life as "a battle and not a hymn" is abundantly clear. The Church claims the baptized as soldiers pledged manfully to wage under Christ's banner a continuous warfare against sin in all its forms, against "the world, the flesh and the devil." Man must not refuse to grapple "the dangers whereby souls grow strong," nor shirk the difficulties by which alone he can learn

"the use of soldiership,
Self-abnegation, freedom from all fear,
Loyalty to the life's end."¹

The soldier of the Caesars was always on active service, and Paul found readily to his hand in the sleepless activities of a militant empire the fit analogue of Christ's militant church. For the Roman armies were constantly on the march, a fact which involved long endurance of hardship, short rations, and rough quarters. It also included abstention from the affairs of ordinary life, the

¹ Browning.

interests of which were incompatible with a soldier's duties. Moreover, the soldier's main purpose would be to please his commander by prompt obedience and ready devotion. These three aspects of the life of a soldier in campaign are reproduced in the Christian warrior. "Suffer hardship," he says to Timothy, "with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No soldier on service suffereth himself to be entangled in the affairs of this life: that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier."¹

The soldier's foes are partly "the flesh" (Gal. v. 17); partly "the rulers of darkness," the spiritual hosts of wickedness (Ephes. vi. 12); and partly "the wiles and snares of the devil" (Ephes. vi. 11, 2 Tim. ii. 26). And for this end the Christian must be thoroughly equipped for the battle, "putting on the whole armour of God," which the apostle minutely describes in the sixth chapter of Ephesians. This panoply of God is also called "the armour of light" (Rom. xiii. 12-13), "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," this being probably a reference to the Roman practice of carrying a sword in one hand and a shield in the other (2 Corinthians vi. 7). The apostle also speaks of the soldier's reward and victory, for although the sense of duty might be regarded as sufficient to inspire devotion, yet the thought of triumph is an additional stimulus. The Captain of our salvation has conquered His foes and has promised victory to His faithful soldiers. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."² "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."³

(2) Life, again, for St. Paul was a *racc*. It is unfortunate, as Dean Howson points out, that the word "fight" in our English Bible should suggest rather the

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 3-4.

² Rom. vii. 37.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 57.

idea of warfare. But the term used in the original has nothing to do with war. "It denotes an athletic contest, and the particular kind of athletic contest is the foot-race."¹ The word employed is used by our Lord—"Strive to enter in by the narrow door" (St. Luke xiii. 24). When Paul says, therefore, to Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith," what he really means is, "Strive earnestly in the race." Allusion is also made to the activity and progress which are marked features of pedestrian competition. "Ye were running well," he writes to the Galatians, "who did hinder you." And he bids the Philippians so act that his labours on their behalf may not be thrown away; that he may not run in vain. The definiteness of aim and ardour of purpose which characterized the Greek athlete he holds up for the imitation of his readers. And though the competitive element is absent in the Christian race, there must be equal earnestness of effort. "Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize! even so run that ye may attain."² He also sets before the Philippians his own example,—“This one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press towards the goal for the prize.”

(3) Life once more is likened to a *pugilistic* encounter. "So fight I (box, marginal reading), as not beating the air, . . . but I buffet my body and bring it into subjection."³ The fear of failure must have been for the pugilist, and especially for those engaged in the arena in a combat with wild beasts, a constant source of anxiety. Paul sees in this a solemn warning in regard to the Christian life, and especially for those who

¹ *Metaphors of St. Paul*, p. 140.

² 1 Cor. ix. 24-26.

³ 1 Cor. ix. 26-27.

are actively engaged in spiritual work for others. "The apostle, therefore, resists his carnal nature, systematically attacks it, and perseveres till he has subdued it; and this he does under the salutary fear that while he has been made a blessing to others, he himself should fail to obtain the reward."¹

The teaching of Paul thus corresponds to the analogy suggested by the process of evolution in nature. The goal of character is perfection, but it is a perfection which is only gradually realized and is dependent not only upon the influence of the Holy Spirit, but also upon the constant endeavours of man. This gradual assimilation to God, this continual reaching forward to new stages and higher levels of life; this perpetual advance from glory to glory under the ceaseless operation of the spirit of holiness, is, as has been remarked, the true law of human development, the most vital and characteristic doctrine of Christian ethics²—the truth,

. . . That man was made to grow, not stop :
That help he needed once and needs no more,
Having grown but an inch by, is withdrawn :
For he hath new needs and new helps to these.
This imports solely, men should mount on each
New height on view : the help whereby he mounts,
The ladder-rung his foot hath left, may fall
Since all things suffer change but God the Truth.³

II.

Aids to the culture of the moral life. The part of our subject which we have just considered, would be incomplete without some reference to the helps or means by which the new life is to be nourished and advanced.

¹ Howson, *Metaphors of St. Paul*, p. 164.

² Ottley, *Christian Ideas and Ideals*, p. 233.

³ Browning.

These, according to Paul, are of two kinds—divine and human;—the disciplinary and providential acts of God which rightly interpreted and used by man conduce to moral growth, and the more personal helps, sometimes called “means of grace,” which the Christian may employ for the culture and nourishment of the spiritual life.

1. Of the first—the *disciplinary* and *providential* experience—much is made in all systems of practical ethics, and it would not be difficult to deduce a doctrine of divine providence from the epistles of Paul. At the same time it must be acknowledged that the apostle has nowhere elaborated a special theory of disciplinary influence, and it is only from casual references that the details as to the salutary effects of life’s experiences can be gathered. The apostle gives no countenance to that withdrawal from the world which came into vogue with a later age. The general trend of his teaching is in harmony with Christ’s prayer for His disciples that they should not be taken out of the world but kept from its evil.¹ “The grace of God hath appeared,” he writes to Titus, “disciplining us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.” Two false attitudes may be taken to the world; that of worldliness, in which the individual yields to its solicitations; and that of asceticism, in which the individual flees from its snares. The attitude which the apostle enjoins is that of sobriety in regard to oneself, righteousness in relation to others, and godliness in relation to God. His maxim is that the Christian is to “use the world,” but not to abuse it, employing its conditions, relationships and trials as the materials out of which he may build up a sober, righteous, and godly character. The life of

¹ John xviii. 15.

trial is part of the divine discipline. Only in the hard ways of experience can holiness be won. Under the means of sanctification are included all the various life of man—the relations which bind human beings into families and other social groups; the joys and sorrows, the temptations and victories, the successes and failures, and all the successive changes that mould the destinies of man on his journey through the world. The entire scope of human experience is a school for the training of character. Life is the field of battle that it may become the field of victory.

There are passages in the epistles, as, for example, 2 Cor. iv. 8-18, in which the apostle seems to regard the disciplinary experiences of life as a kind of necessary evil to be endured or submitted to, and which if borne in the right spirit will bring their appropriate compensations in the way of future consolation or blessing. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." But it would be a mistake to assume that such a negative attitude to trial was the only one commended by the apostle. He lays emphasis rather upon the positive character of all the events of life. Everything that befalls, be it joy or sorrow, is to be welcomed as a direct gift of God, and is to be recognized by the Christian as an actual factor in his spiritual development,

"Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed."

We are too apt to assume that only a portion of our life comes from God with a direct commission to bless. What is obviously pleasant and profitable we recognize as the gift of God; but the rest, however God may

subsequently avert its injury or turn it to our good, we do not accept as a minister of grace.¹ We are slow to recognize that

“In the eye of God
Pain may have purpose and be justified :
Man's sense avails to only see, in pain,
A hateful chance no man but would avert
Or, failing, needs must pity.”²

The attitude which Paul bids his brethren take to the so-called ills of life is a much more positive one. Christians are not merely to stand on the defensive towards life's afflictions, to pray that they may be saved from them, or even trust they may be enabled to endure them without repining. Rather are they to welcome and embrace them as offering a good which they could ill afford to lose. No element of life need be wasted or regarded as barren of inspiration and enrichment. “We know,” says the apostle, in words of ringing triumph, “that all things work together for good to them that love God.”³ “In everything give thanks,” for every experience is a token and also a means of blessing. All things are working, not perhaps for immediate happiness, but for the highest profit. Love to God transmutes everything into gold, and there is nothing in a good man's life which does not enrich his inmost nature and conduce to the growth of his character.

The means of discipline are as manifold as the individuals who are exercised by them, and to enumerate the various influences which God uses in any particular case for the furtherance of the spiritual life would be an impossible task. It will suffice to mention three types of

¹ See some valuable remarks in *The Christian Method of Ethics*, by H. W. Clark, p. 205 ff.

² Browning.

³ Rom. viii. 28.

experience which, when rightly accepted and used, tend to the development of human character.

(1) *Temptation.* While temptation, as the apostle James says, may not come from God,¹ it is nevertheless an instrument in God's hands and wholly under His control for the discipline of life. It is not permitted to exceed in severity what God in His perfect wisdom sees to be necessary. It never makes sin inevitable. There will always be a way of escape.² As long as we continue in life we shall be subjected to the pressure of evil. But, says the apostle, we are not under its dominion, nor is it ever necessary to yield to temptation. So far from it being true that a Christian ought not to feel the pressure of evil, the fact is that only a Christian can feel it in its intensity. It is not the guilty but the pure who are most haunted with a sense of sin, and none is so ready to burst into confession as he who has apparently least to confess.³ The seventh chapter of Romans lays stress upon this phase of experience. To test and confirm the Christian's standing in Christ, temptation is ordained, used and measured by God. Progress in the moral life consists in combatting and overcoming sin. Without such conflict character would be ineffective and nerveless. The men who most escape it, "who most completely realize the false elysium of an easy life;" whose lot is undisturbed by danger and unvisited by temptation; are rarely those who penetrate most deeply to the moral significance of life and are alive to its noblest affections. Not only does the "new creature" first emerge from the throes of his birth-struggle with evil, but the immortal ego grows by continual striving with those darker tendencies of his nature, which are the test

¹ St. James, i. 13.

² 1 Cor. x. 13.

³ Martineau, *Hours of Thought*, vol. i. p. 198.

and measure of his manhood. Warfare is the perpetual as it is the earliest necessity of the higher nature. The Spirit depends for manifestation upon the interaction of opposites. The "new man" cannot develop his inherent greatness without the resisting agency of the carnal mind. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit." The believer never gets entirely rid of his foe. As long as life lasts the essence of the carnal mind persists, if a man is to work out his destiny amid terrestrial conditions. It is through the conflict of contending forces that the Christian manhood is evolved.¹

"Why comes temptation but for man to meet
And master and make crouch beneath his feet
And so be pedestalled in triumph?"²

(2) *Suffering*. The New Testament view of suffering is that it is a divine appointment, an instrument of God for the chastening and developing of man. Both in the Gospels and in the apostolic writings this idea is prominent. It is not, of course, original to Christianity. It occurs in most religions in which the personality of the deity is acknowledged. It is a favourite thought in the Old Testament. It is prevalent in later Stoicism; and among New Testament writers, St. Peter and the unknown author of the epistle to the Hebrews dwell most frequently upon it. Not only does suffering test and purify character (1 Peter i. 6-7), it also fits for service, making even the Captain of our Salvation perfect (Heb. ii. 10, v. 8). The whole doctrine of suffering for the Christian is condensed in our Lord's saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things." . . . "If any man would

¹ See C. E. Woods, *The Gospel of Rightness*, p. 27, a work rich in suggestion.

² Browning, *Ring and Book*.

come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall save it.”¹ The apostle Paul recognizes the value of suffering in his own experience. He came to see that

“This is His will who hath endured, and only
Sendeth the promise where He sends the pain.”²

The thorn in the flesh, whatever it was, was not merely a corrective of spiritual pride,³ but a means of contributing to the strength and efficiency of his Christian life and ministry. “Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak then am I strong.” Readiness to suffer pain or loss may become the measure of devotion to Christ and the condition of growth in the understanding and appreciation of His work. “I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.”⁴ It is, further, the condition of closer union with Christ and larger possession of spiritual power. “Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him.”⁵ The epistle to the Colossians is generally lacking in the personal references which we find in another of the Pauline epistles of the captivity, that to the Philippians; but we find in that letter one wonderful passage which sets the apostle’s own sufferings

¹ Luke ix. 22 ff.

² Myers, *St. Paul*.

³ 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

⁴ Phil. iii. 7-8.

⁵ Rom. viii. 17; 2 Cor. i. 7; 2 Tim. ii. 12.

for the Colossian Church in a peculiarly significant aspect. He says, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sakes, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church."¹ Without entering upon the various explanations which have been offered of this obscure passage, it is obvious that two ideas at least seem to be implied. The first is that Christ truly participates in the sufferings His people bear for Him. The Head feels the pangs of all its members, so that it may be said that the pains and sorrows of the Redeemer's followers to the end of time are one great whole. Never are the disciples so near their Master in character and sympathy as when they are actually bearing His burden. From this follows the second thought, that the influence of sorrow is not confined to the personality of the sufferer. The sufferings borne in the flesh are for the "body's sake," the Church, so that every trial rightly borne is fruitful in blessing not only to him who endures it, but to the whole community of believers who are knit together in Christ. Paul thus recognizes the unifying character and vicarious aspect of Christian suffering, and for this reason he rejoices in his trials, that they are not only a means of enriching his own life, but a channel of blessing to others.

(3) *Work*. Labour in the heathen world was regarded as a base thing, fit only for slaves. The Jews alone among ancient peoples attached no stigma to labour, but on the contrary recognized it as an honourable thing. According to Hebrew law every Jewish child must learn a trade, and we know that Jesus followed His father's craft and was known as the carpenter's son.² St. Paul

¹ Col. i. 24-27.

² See Ps. civ. 23; also *Education of Christ*, by Sir William Ramsay, p. 66.

did not think it derogatory to imitate his Master in this respect and to work with his hands for his own support. He did not wish to be a burden on the Christian community, and though he might have claimed its aid, he took care to make himself independent.¹ He mentions with approbation several of his co-labourers in the Gospel who were engaged in manual occupation. He expressly denounces idleness and sloth. There was an unmistakable disposition on the part of the converts to the new faith to break with the existing rules of life. A spirit of unrest and impatience had arisen in some quarters in view of the near approach of the end of the world and the coming of Christ. Thus in Thessalonica there appeared among the brethren a tendency to indolence and apathy. Men, impelled by unrest, abandoned work and ceased to attend to their domestic and civic duties, thus bringing the faith into disrepute among their fellow-citizens. Paul found it necessary to enjoin them to make it a point of honour to live quietly, to attend to their own business and to do their daily work, so that they might lead an honourable and independent life in their dealings with their neighbours.² "Even as we charged you that ye may walk honestly towards them that are without, and that ye may have need of nothing."³ In the second epistle he alludes to the same matter, laying down the rule "that if any will not work neither let him eat."⁴

So far from regarding work as a hindrance to the life of faith the apostle obviously sees in it not only a means of promoting the common virtues of honesty, fidelity, perseverance and honourable independence, but

¹ 2 Thess. iii. 8.

² Weizsäcker, *The Apostolic Age*, vol. ii. p. 366.

³ 1 Thess. iv. 11-12.

⁴ 2 Thess. iii. 10.

also an instrument by which God fits his children for higher service.¹

2. But besides these disciplinary influences, there are others of a *more personal kind*, more within the control of the individual, which the apostle commends for the nourishment and advancement of the spiritual life. As these, however, have more to do with the strictly religious than the moral character, and may be regarded as aids to piety rather than to ethical progress, we shall do little more than state them.

Of this class of helps there are two sub-divisions, which may be styled objective and subjective aids.² The objective include the Word of God, the Church, and the Sacraments: the subjective, self-examination, watchfulness and prayer.

First, of *the objective*, we may note (1) *The Word of God*—as the revealed truth of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament,³ τὰ ἱερά γραμμάτα; and in Christ's own word,⁴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ χριστοῦ—was highly valued by the apostle as a means of instruction and sanctification. The Word of God, not the mere letter but the spirit (2 Cor. iii. 6) as the revealer of the law, not only convicts of sin and leads to Christ, but also powerfully promotes the growth and fruitfulness of the spiritual life.⁵ The apostle emphatically commends the use of the Scriptures, which he says to Timothy are able to make wise unto salvation⁶ through faith which is in Christ Jesus. "For every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 15-21.

² See Ernesti, *Die Ethik des Apostel Paulus*, p. 56.

³ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

⁴ Col. iii. 16.

⁵ Col. i. 3-6.

⁶ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

may be completely furnished unto every good work." Faith is awakened when the Word is preached,¹ and it is owing to the high estimate he put upon the "Word" that Paul regards himself and his brother apostles as ambassadors of reconciliation. Believers are commended not only to let the word of Christ dwell in them in all wisdom,² but to publish it abroad as glad tidings of good things.³

(2) *The Church*, as the Christian organism in which the individual believer finds his place of blessing and service, is according to Paul another effective instrument for stimulating the Christian life. The Church is the body of Christ, therefore Christ is the spirit of the Church. As yet no need had arisen to distinguish between the visible and invisible Church. Paul looked upon the bright side of congregational life and trusted that the evils which appear from time to time would disappear through the healthy piety of the better element. The Christian community in each place awakened his tenderest affection and most anxious solicitude. He knew the history of every congregation, and he was acquainted with the leading spirits in each locality. The Church was the home of piety, the nursery of the Christian graces and the centre of fellowship and service. He found among the individual members his most trusty allies, and in writing to them it was his habit to introduce what he had to say to them by words of praise and recognition. The rivalry of love, the readiness for sacrifice, the spirit of fellowship and co-operation, the glowing hope for the future and the enthusiastic eagerness to suffer for Jesus' sake, were features which, in spite of some things which were disappointing, he delighted to acknowledge and commend as elements which

¹ Rom. x. 8-15.

² Col. iii. 16.

³ Rom. x. 15.

contributed to the growth and efficiency of individual believers as well as to the progress of Christianity in the world.

(3) *The Sacraments.* Of these *baptism* more particularly marks the entrance upon the new life. Valued at first simply as a sign of membership, the rite seems ultimately to have come to be regarded in the Christian Church as a condition of salvation as well. Paul regarded it as a symbol of purifying grace, but in the record of his missionary labours it is not prominent.

In the epistle to the Galatians, where Paul elaborates the idea of the Christian life as a dying and rising again with Christ, he makes no mention of baptism, though we might naturally have expected him to have seen in the rite a symbolic representation of Christ's cleansing and transforming power. It is only in the epistle to Romans that the apostle employs sacramental language in this connection.¹ Baptism symbolizes the great mystery of regeneration. The baptized convert is to feel that he steps forth from the water a different person to what he was when he entered it. In writing to Titus he distinctly connects the washing of regeneration with the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and in 1 Cor. xii. 12 he seems to indicate that the remembrance of the baptismal rite acts as a constant incentive and encouragement to the Christian to be faithful to the vows he has made.

The Lord's Supper is distinctly set forth by the apostle as a help to the spiritual life. The classical passage is that contained in the eleventh chap. of 1 Cor., where the partaking of the bread and wine is not merely set forth as an act of remembrance of Christ's death, but as a means of communion with the Risen Lord

¹ See Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 274.

and actual participation in His divine life. There can be no doubt that Paul attached a very sacred significance to the Lord's Supper and saw in it an emblem of the mystery of Christ's relation to man. Both elements had for him a beautiful appropriateness. The bread he seemed to regard more especially as the symbol of Christ's presence in the Church, while the wine was the emblem of His death by which He had become the new Paschal Sacrifice. Thus the whole mystery was for Paul and the early Church a solemn ordinance and holy channel of grace. In it Christ came visibly near, and His incarnation, death and present life in a very real sense were brought into closest touch with the believers. But Paul was no sacramentarian as we now understand the term. He could not indeed feel the acuteness of the problem as it has been presented though the collision of the Catholic and Protestant theories of later times. Helpful, nay indispensable to the full realization of the Christian's privileges as Paul believes the sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper, to be, they are but subordinate means of grace. When the Corinthian Church threatened to lapse into superstitious regard for externals he warns them very earnestly. Sacraments, he says, do not save a man from the judgment of wrath which God has appointed to the sinner. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth—that is, whosoever thinks that through the sacraments he possesses eternal life—take heed lest he fall. "Ye cannot," he says, "drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils."¹ And he very clearly intimates to the Galatians that no mere rite or sacrament can save of itself; neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but faith working by love.²

¹ 1 Cor. x. 1-21.

² Gal. v.

Secondly, of the *subjective aids* we may mention (1) *Self-examination*. Writing to the Corinthians Paul says, "Try your own selves whether ye be in the faith. Prove your own selves"; and to the Galatians, "Let each prove his own work," so that each may not only know how he stands, but be able to correct his faults and take means of improving his position. (2) *Watchfulness* (γρηγοροῦντες, Col. iv. 2) is connected with prayer and thanksgiving. Everything that befalls the believer exerts some kind of influence upon him. He must therefore carefully guard all the avenues of the soul, so that he may not merely repel evil, but actually transmute it into means of strength and victory.¹

(3) *Prayer*, whether consisting of words or "groanings that cannot be uttered," maintains the heart in the filial attitude, delivers it from fear and fills it with the spirit of God.² By lifting up the soul to God, the child grows into divine fellowship and becomes receptive of his heavenly Father's inward working. Praying is thus represented as one of the most direct of all aids to the spiritual life, both because it is the spontaneous outgoing of the heart to God, and because it prepares the way for the Holy Spirit to communicate His gifts to the believer. For Paul there is no more characteristic feature of the Christian life. It is the joyous atmosphere in which the apostle himself lives. Nowhere does this strong and loving personality stand forth more clearly revealed than in his prayers. He begins and ends nearly every letter with a petition, and everywhere his requests are united with joy and thanksgiving. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks,"—this, he says, is God's will as made known in Jesus Christ. Prayerful trust and joy are the notes of the Christian life as

¹ 1 Thess. v. 8.

² Gal. iv. 6.

Paul understood it. Praise is the complement of prayer. The grateful heart finds life transfigured. It discerns everywhere tokens of a gracious providence,

“Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good.”

The spirit of thanksgiving checks impatience and despondency: it is, as St. Bernard says, “the return of the heart to God in perpetual benediction.”¹ Sometimes, indeed, Paul prays for temporal blessings,² but his chief care is for the growth of his people in Christian faith and love, and he has given expression to this desire in an utterance of comprehensive scope and tender regard—“This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that ye may approve things that are excellent: that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ: being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.”

From all this we may see that St. Paul was no perfectionist.

“Let no man think that sudden in a minute
All is accomplished and the work is done:—
Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it
Scarce were it ended on thy setting sun.”³

In the life we live here in the flesh goodness must perforce be a gradual attainment. The balance and rightness of life are the final result of a long conflict of opposites. Flesh and spirit, sin and grace, law and love, the “old man” “and the new” are in continual strife,

¹ Quoted by Ottley, *Christian Ideas and Ideals*, p. 107.

² 1 Thess. iii. 9; 2 Cor. i. 10; 1 Thess. i. 2.

³ Myers, *Saint Paul*.

and the higher order of life is gained not by a suppression of the lower, but by a gradual transformation. The natural is the basis of the spiritual, and the material out of which the new life is being slowly built up. Temptations within and without do not cease to vex the Christian. "Es irrt der Mensch so lang er strebt."

The apostle Paul is no theorist clinging to a purely ideal doctrine of redemption. Nor is he a fanatic ready to shut his eyes to the uncomfortable facts of this strenuous and difficult life. The churches in Corinth, Galatia and Rome were far from perfect. Paul sought to believe the best concerning his converts, viewing them *sub specie aeternitatis*, and in the light of all the glorious possibilities of a redeemed soul; yet he had no illusions as to the present imperfect conditions of men and churches. When he hears of sin he calls it by its plain name. And he attempts neither to hush up unsavoury happenings nor minimize their serious significance. His motto for himself and others is, "speaking the truth in love." Occasionally, indeed, the failure of the few seems to darken unduly his picture of the Christian society. Yet so great was his sense of the nearness and reality of the unseen forces which shape men's lives, that the effect is never really depressing. He never loses courage nor abates by one iota his splendid faith in the power of Christ.

PART III
DUTIES AND SPHERES

CHAPTER IX

DUTIES IN RELATION TO SELF

So far we have been dealing with the more general ethical ideal of St. Paul, and have been concerned chiefly with the indwelling motive-power, the inner impulse and movement from which Christian morality springs. We have now to consider how the virtues of the Pauline ideal issue in their corresponding *duties* and cover the whole field of man's life.

The whole subject of the relation of virtues and duties is one of the vexed questions of ethics. Neither term is, strictly speaking, a New Testament term at all. The word "virtue," as we have seen, is seldom used by Paul, and the word "duty," which is borrowed from philosophy and was prominent in Stoicism, inadequately describes both on the side of its obligation and its joy, the service which the Christian is pledged to offer to Christ. Three stages may be discerned in the ethical development of the world—that of "pleasure for pleasure's sake," that of "duty for duty's sake," and that of "love for love's sake." The Christian belongs, at least ideally, to the last stage, in which the two moments of pleasure and duty are united in a higher synthesis of love. The Christian, for love's sake, will do more than is in duty's bonds. And his joy in the doing of it will be his assurance that he is

in the way of right. Love fulfils the finer spirit and essence of the law and finds the "commandments" not grievous. It is this ultimate unity of duty and inclination achieved by love of which Wordsworth sings so beautifully :

"Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security."¹

Virtues and duties are not to be strictly distinguished. "The doctrine of duties and the doctrine of virtues," says Paulsen, "are different modes of presenting the same subject-matter."² Virtue is the quality of character which fits for the discharge of duty, and is therefore not opposed to duty, save as good character is in general opposed to good conduct in general.³ The performance of a duty has moral quality only in so far as it is the expression of a virtue; and, on the other hand, virtue only lives in the performance of duty. Virtues are graces, ideal goods; duties are acts or efforts which seek to realize virtues. Duties are based on the nature of the self. What I can do is at once the measure and obligation of what I ought to do. Perhaps the simplest way of looking at the whole matter is to regard the relation between virtue and duty as that of universal to particular. Duty, though a particular act in so far as it is a relation to station and circumstances, has a universal element. Each particular duty contains in itself the principle of all duty, and must flow directly from one supreme motive. It follows that since morality is never mechanical obedience to a fixed code of rules, particular duties can neither be exactly measured nor exhaustively

¹ *Ode to Duty*.

² *Ethics*, bk. iii. chap. i.

³ Muirhead, *Elements of Ethics*, p. 177.

detailed. Distinctions between "determinate and indeterminate duties," or "duties of perfect and imperfect obligation," are, as Kant suggests, a contradiction in terms. All duty which is duty at all is a bounden duty. It is as much a duty to be charitable and forgiving as to pay one's debts. Thus all questions which have so largely engaged moralists as to the sphere of the permissible, the distinction between the works of supererogation and the minimum of duty, and even those which relate to the conflict of duties, seem idle and delusive. There is no part of life which is colourless. A Christian can really do no more than his duty. The law of Christ is sovereign over every department of life; and that which we cannot justify to our consciences, that which does not contribute to the development of our highest personality, is morally indefensible. Of course this does not mean that no difficulties will arise in the path of duty, and that the Christian possesses a clean-cut, ready-made rule which he can apply in every case. It is often a difficult task to determine what we ought to do. But "difficulties rightly encountered educate the mind," and he who is resolved always to be true to the highest he sees, despite consequences, may make mistakes, but he is not unvirtuous; he may be on the wrong side, but he is never on the side of wrong. St. Paul has expressly recognized and adopted as the motto of the man who is free from the law, "all things are lawful,"¹ and has given the principle the most extensive application when he says "all things are yours."² This he could do, because he wholly and completely set aside the notion of the indifference of action. The Christian is at every moment completely free from every external commandment, but only for the reason that at every

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 12.

² 1 Cor. iii. 22.

moment he is determined by and bound to duty by his devotion to the perfect will of God, which has become a part of his nature. He does all, without exception, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to the glory of God the Father.¹

Though, for the reason already stated, most divisions of duties that have been suggested are open to some objection, probably the scheme most serviceable to us in analyzing the various precepts of the apostle will be that which divides duties into personal, social and religious, duties in relation to self, duties in relation to others, and duties in relation to God, as the supreme end of being. It must be remembered, however, that this is scarcely a logical division. Moral obligations are intricately interwoven in the web of life. As all virtues are really manifestations of one, the sovereign virtue of love, so all duties are but particular aspects of the one supreme obligation of devotion to God. Since all duties are, in the last analysis, religious, Kant and other moralists have objected to the admission into ethics of a special class of duties towards God. Others have objected to the distinction of duties in relation to self because we cannot isolate moral qualities from moral conditions, nor can we conceive of the realization of any individual character apart from the conception of the society in which it has its place and exercise. As Green profoundly remarks, "no individual can make a conscience for himself. He always needs a society to make it for him."² "Duty is nothing else than the harmony in the recognition of God's will—a harmony of our own true good with the true good of others."³

¹ Col. iii. 17.

² *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 351.

³ Mackintosh, *Christian Ethics*, p. 119.

Still, with these deductions, it may be permissible to frame a scheme of obligations according as one or other element is prominent in each case. We begin, then, with *personal duties*, and shall deal in what remains of this chapter with duties toward Self. This subject, however, we shall subdivide: first, the Apostle's view of the individual in himself; second, in relation to his physical organism; and third, in relation to worldly affairs.

I.

Of the duty of the individual to himself. Love, in Christian ethics, is, as we have seen, motive and impulse of all duty. But if that be so, it seems an abuse of terms to speak of a duty to oneself. If duty has love for its constraining motive, to say one must be dutiful to oneself seems to be only another way of saying one must love oneself. And in a sense it is true that self-love has its place as an element in that larger love to God and humanity, since such love would be meaningless unless my personality were involved in it. It is obvious that without the realization of self there can be no realization of others. One can neither injure one's own personality from love to another without injury to that other, nor can one neglect social considerations through self-love without injury to oneself. I cannot make myself of no account even in my love for another. So inextricably are the individual and society bound together in the kingdom of love that neither can reach its goal without the other. While we cannot agree with Kierkegaard¹ that the individual is the only subject of ethics, we may at least acknowledge that the individual is the

¹ For an interesting account of the Danish thinker's philosophy of Individualism, see Martensen's *Christian Ethics*, vol. i. 217 ff.

starting-point, and that genuine self-love is just the will of each to become a real member of the kingdom of God, a moral personality in fellowship with God and his neighbours. It is in this sense, and this sense only, that the well-known lines may be said to comprise the whole duty of man :

"To thine own self be true !
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Duties towards self are plainly recognized in the New Testament. The second great commandment enunciated by our Lord, and endorsed by St. Paul, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,"¹ makes a rightly conceived self-love the measure of love to one's neighbour. And in the epistles of Paul there are precepts which imply the existence of the self as a moral end. The apostle exhorts the Christian to "prove" himself, to "examine" himself, to have his "glorying" in regard of himself alone, to "keep himself" from evil. Husbands are "to love their wives as their own bodies," since, in conformity with the second commandment of Jesus, "he that loveth his own wife loveth himself."² In these, and similar injunctions, Paul clearly implies that there is a natural and praiseworthy self-love which is not to be confounded with selfishness, and that each soul is an end in itself before God. Personality is a sacred trust which we hold from and for our Creator. We are to make the best of ourselves for God and to use all our gifts for the highest realization of our being. So much may be legitimately inferred from the writings of the apostle, not indeed from any particular passage, but from the general spirit and trend of his teaching.

¹ Matt. xxii. 39 ; Mar. xii. 31.

² Eph. v. 28.

At the same time it cannot be denied that the Pauline utterances with regard to personal duty are not very numerous or very explicit. The teaching which forms so large a part of text-books with regard to the duty of self-preservation, the maintenance of all bodily and spiritual functions, as well as their mutual harmony and helpfulness; the duty of self-protection in the use of the means for the sustenance of life; the avoidance of things hurtful and the cultivation of things beneficial; the duty of self-development and the proper appreciation of the natural life as a supreme good—all these personal obligations which, in modern times, are regarded as primary objects in the moral use of life, can scarcely be said to be touched upon by the apostle at all.

Two reasons may be assigned for this absence of self-regarding precepts. First of all, it may be that Paul of design dwells only lightly upon the duties of self-realization. Writing as he did to Greek communities and others acquainted with Hellenic thought, among whom self-development, self-culture, self-realization—the ideal of a harmonious symmetrical nature—was the chief art of life, he may have felt that not so much the virtue of self-regard as that of self-forgetfulness was what called for special emphasis. While Paul does not conceal the truth that the soul has an inherent and inalienable worth, it may be that he regarded it as a symptom of morbid egoism, and not a sign of a healthy personality to be constantly occupied with the thought of oneself. The problem of self-scrutiny, the reiterated question—am I getting the most out of my life, am I taking the full benefit of all the means of education and culture available?—is apt to become, even in the case of a Goethe, a form of refined selfishness, and to engender a narrow, computing, prudential spirit which is fatal to the moral

life. Human nature is such that it requires little encouragement to self-centring affection. The difficulty rather is to incite men to disinterestedness and self-sacrifice. But perhaps the chief reason why Paul does not enlarge upon the duty of self-culture is that, like his Master, he regarded the true realization of self as identical with self-sacrifice. There is no antithesis between self-cultivation and self-abnegation, and it is only as a man loses his life that he finds it. We live by dying. We get as we give. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."¹ The paradox of the spiritual life is the paradox observable in all life, "in biological organisms, physiological tissues, intellectual achievements, even in economic progress."² "There is that scattereth, yet increaseth." "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days." Store away thy seed in the granary of thine own heart, and it will rot; sow it broadcast on the waters of life, and it will return to thee as the bread and nutriment of thy soul. To bury one's talent is to destroy it; to hoard one's possessions is to waste them; to save one's life is to lose it. Growth is the condition of life, and in growth there is a reciprocity of expenditure and assimilation, of giving and receiving. Not by anxiously standing guard over one's soul, but by dedicating it freely to the good of others, does one realize one's true self. The nature which withholds itself is dwarfed and stunted; that which is joyously

¹ May it not be possible that Paul was acquainted with that saying of our Lord? Almost in the same words, though in a different connection, he says "that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." 1 Cor. xv. 36.

² Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*, p. 203.

yielded up for others' good is enriched and enlarged. Self-realization is only reached through self-surrender. We live to our full capacity only as we live in others. Hence, though for Paul personality is a sacred trust, he more often sounds the note of self-sacrifice as the secret of self-development, and lays stress upon the effacement rather than the magnifying of self. "In lowliness of mind," he says, "let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."¹

There is, however, one self-respecting virtue Paul does repeatedly emphasize—the *virtue of stability*, firmness of character, steadfastness of purpose, singleness of aim. He returns again and again to exhortations like these: "Stand," "Hold fast," "Quit you like men, be strong," "Watch and be sober."² The Christian is to be no weak, flabby creature, without backbone or sinew, who simply accommodates himself to his environment, and yields easily to the corruptions and usages amid which he lives. He is to be a man, to know his own mind, to have a purpose and to keep it—to gather all his energies, and make a stand for faith, for liberty, for Christ. He is to be a soldier enduring hardness and putting on the whole armour of God, withstanding to the utmost every assault of the enemy.

This firmness of character is to take the form of *independence of judgment* in relation to the opinions of others. There is a sense in which the Christian is to become a law unto himself. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."³ "Hast thou faith? have

¹ Phil. ii. 3, 4. Cp. also Rom. xv. 1-7.

² Eph. vi. 10-17; 1 Cor. xvi. 13; Gal. v. 1; Phil. i. 27; iv. 1; 1 Cor. x. 12; 1 Thess. v. 5; Col. iv. 2.

³ Rom. xiv. 5.

it for thyself before God." Believe in thyself. Thou mayst not relegate thy trust to another. Each is accountable only to his Lord, not to another. Every man is a "steward of the mysteries of God," and "it is required of a steward that he be faithful."¹ St. Paul asserts in no equivocal terms his own independence. "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment."² He is not afraid to vindicate his conduct. He proudly repels all reproaches. No man, he tells the Corinthians, is to be the slave of another man's conscience.³ The Christian ought to shake himself free from partisanship and subserviency. Let him take the truth from none but Christ. Let no man glory in men. With Paul the individual conscience is sacred and supreme. Each must give an account of himself,—but only to God. Whatever the conscience does not forbid is good; but, on the other hand, whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. A man must be able to justify his conduct, all the more because he is not answerable to others. At the same time it cannot be denied that the conscience of the majority of the Gentile converts was degraded and darkened. How indistinct were the boundaries in many cases between right and inclination, obligation and habit! Even with many to-day the conscience is exceedingly elastic and variable, "letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would.'" The aim must, therefore, be to educate the conscience till it attain to Christian clearness. The "mind" must be changed step by step and brought into harmony with "the mind of Christ." It must be weaned from worldly standards, so that it may become capable of understanding the will of God, which is perfect and good. "The natural man," says

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 1-3.² 1 Cor. iv. 3.³ 1 Cor. x. 28.

Paul, "receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."¹

II.

St. Paul treats with greater fulness the relations of the individual with the outer world, to which he is linked by his own *bodily organism*. The Christian is a man who holds lightly to the things of this life. Through Christ he is emancipated from the bondage of his old surroundings. Old things are passed away. His life is now hid with God in Christ. He is therefore in an entirely new relationship with earthly things. The world is crucified unto him, and he unto the world.² In virtue of this new standing, the whole world of sense, his own body and all the affairs of this temporal life, are of comparatively little account to him. They are nothing in themselves. He is superior to them all. He belongs to a kingdom in which these things have no real significance. "Meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat are we better, neither if we eat not are we the worse."³ "For no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." In Romans xiv. he seeks to show how devotion to the outward is often merely a kind of religious worldliness, that the observance of times and seasons, the partaking of or abstention from meats and drinks is absolutely without value for the Christian life. The Christian stands wholly free from things like these. Nothing is unclean of itself. All things are pure. One man believes that he may eat all things; another that he may only eat herbs. One man esteemeth one day above

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.² Gal. vi. 14.³ 1 Cor. viii. 8.

another, another esteemeth every day alike. It is not things that make men moral, it is men that make things moral or immoral. It is the mind that is the measure and criterion of the outward, not the outward that is the test of the inward. "To him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. "The earth is the Lord's and all that is therein."¹ All things are therefore lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.² Asceticism, for its own sake, has no moral worth. It may even become the occasion of false pride. Such things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and neglect of the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.³

"What imports
Fasting or feasting? Do thy day's work, dare
Refuse no help thereto, since help refused
Is hindrance sought and found."⁴

"The one valid principle, therefore, is whether ye eat or whether ye drink, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, and thank God the Father through Him."⁵

The *human body* is held in high regard by the apostle. It is the temple of God,⁶ the organ of the Holy Spirit,⁷ the basis of the future resurrection-body which is to be fashioned in the likeness of Christ's glorious body.⁸ It must not therefore be abused. On the contrary, its members are to become instruments in the service of righteousness.⁹ Only in the case in which it threatens to become master must the individual strive to keep his

¹ 1 Cor. x. 26.

² 1 Cor. vi. 12; x. 23.

³ Col. iii. 23.

⁴ Browning.

⁵ 1 Cor. x. 31; Rom. xiv. 6.

⁶ 1 Cor. vi. 19.

⁷ Rom. vi. 13, 19.

⁸ Phil. iii. 21.

⁹ Rom. vi. 13, 19.

body under and bring it into subjection.¹ Here the law of self-control is to be brought into play. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." All sinful lusts and inordinate desires are to be put off with the old man, to be crushed down; and even our members which have become the instruments of uncleanness are to be mortified.² Here St. Paul endorses the spirit of his Master's teaching. "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire."³ But so far from these utterances disclosing a disparagement of the body, they are a witness to the high honour and sacredness with which he regarded it. St. Paul dissociates himself entirely from that contempt of the flesh, the material part of man, as inherently evil, which was prevalent in Greek philosophy, and especially in Stoicism, at his time. The body is holy, and it too, as an integral part of man, has been redeemed and renewed by Christ. "Ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."⁴

The apostle's views regarding the physical nature are perhaps most clearly indicated in his references to the *relation of the sexes*. While he strongly condemns all sins of the flesh, and all irregular and unlawful intercourse, he will have no part with those who denounce marriage and make light of wedded love.⁵ Marriage is not only not forbidden by him, but it is in some circumstances and for some individuals commended as the better estate. There are, however, cases in which it is desirable to refrain from marriage, not on ascetic grounds, but because a man is less hampered by earthly affairs and better able without distraction to serve God.⁶ Paul

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 27.² Col. iii. 5 ff.³ Matt. xviii. 8; Mar. ix. 43.⁴ 1 Cor. vi. 20.⁵ 1 Cor. vii. 1 ff.⁶ *Ibid.* 8, 32, 33, 35.

distinctly says that this is only a personal and private opinion, which finds its illustration in his own life. He himself was a voluntary abstainer from marriage relations that he might the better perform the duties of his apostolic calling. It is not in his view a sin to marry; nor is it a merit to refrain from marriage. Each must here judge for himself in what state he can best serve God. Let a man not marry merely for the sake of marriage. If he can stand steadfast in his heart, and hath power over his own will, feeling no necessity, then he does well to remain as he is. Here, as elsewhere, the law of freedom must prevail; but at the same time it will be well if men sit lightly towards all the joys and engagements of this life. For, after all, the time is short; we are hastening to a day when all such concerns will have no meaning. We belong already to a spiritual kingdom. "It remaineth, therefore, that both they that have wives be as though they had none."

It must be acknowledged that St. Paul in this passage at least, does not present us with a very high regard for marriage. He fails to shake himself free from the ascetic tendencies of his day to which marriage was a state, if not to be rejected, at least to be accounted of secondary importance. It was not only the expectation which he shared with his Christian contemporaries of the approaching end of the age, and his belief that those who married would have trouble in the flesh in the time of suffering close at hand¹ that impelled him to this opinion. But in general he looks upon wedded life from the sexual point of view, and regards it as essentially a concession to weakness. The conception of marriage as a spiritual union, a fellowship of heart and mind, in which the man and woman mutually contribute

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 26-28.

to the enrichment and realization of the higher life is a view which can scarcely be deduced from this passage at least. Marriage is at the best only a second best—a permission to obviate greater evils. It must not indeed be forgotten that in two other passages at least, Ephesians v. 32 and 1 Cor. ii. 3, Paul places marriage so high as to make it the type of the close spiritual union which subsists between Christ and His Church.¹

In his use of the word "Sanctification" and kindred words derived from the language of ritual to describe the duties man owes to himself, Paul may, as Wernle suggests, show traces of his early training in the school of the Scribes.² In Paul's use of it, the word is frequently limited, as it is also in later literature, to the consecration of the bodily members.³ There were possibly two reasons why the apostle laid emphasis upon this narrower aspect of sanctification. (1) One was the circumstances amid which the early converts were placed. Men in such cities as Corinth, Ephesus and Rome were exposed to the grosser temptations of the flesh. Sanctification in the physical sense was bound, therefore, to constitute the first task of the Christian life. A higher morality only becomes possible when the animal passions have been brought under control. So the apostle begins his exhortations to the Thessalonians with these words: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication"; and in the forefront of his great exhortation to the Romans stands the immortal words, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."

(2) Can we venture to suggest, as some have done,

¹ See chap. xi. for a further discussion of this subject from the point of view of the family.

² *Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 199. ³ See *ibid.* vol. ii. p. 334.

that the other reason for the stress laid upon this aspect of sanctification may have been a personal one? Did Paul know from his own experience the awful power and subtle dangers of the lusts of the flesh? "It may surprise some," says Prof. Bruce, "that so good and kindly a man as the apostle Paul should have found in the body or the flesh so much of a hindrance to the spiritual life, . . . but we may take it as certain that such was the fact. In spite of his passion for holiness the flesh was constantly and obstinately obstructive. . . . Who can tell what painful inner experiences this saintly man passed through in this direction?"¹ That the flesh meant for him very specially, though not exclusively, sexual impulse it is possible to infer from the prominent place given to sins of impurity in his catalogue of the works of the flesh. On the other hand, it is to be remembered that Paul always claimed to have lived, even in his pre-Christian days, by the holy light of conscience. And it is the purest who feel most keenly the stain of sins like these. In any case Paul knew human nature well. He was a man of like passions with ourselves. Temptation is the common lot, and if Paul felt its power and had to fight the "brute within" he was well aware that those to whom he wrote would be in a like case. In the seventh chapter of Romans mention is made of this tragic fight with the flesh, and in that extremely significant autobiographical hint in 1 Corinthians, "I buffet my body and bring it into bondage," we gather that Paul found it necessary to be in effect an ascetic in the practical sense of taking special means to prevent the body with its passions from getting the upper hand. Knowing human nature to be what it was, and well acquainted with the

¹ *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p. 264 ff.

foulness of the heathen world, it is not wonderful that his first object should be to remind his converts that self-discipline, and even self-denial, especially in the matter of chastity, was a part of religion itself, and that without the fulfilment of this preliminary condition they could have no share in redemption or attain to the holiness of God.

But while the apostle thus emphasizes the necessity of self-discipline and the mastery of the physical impulses, we should obtain an altogether erroneous idea of his teaching if we limited his notion of sanctification to the body alone. The soul and spirit are also to be consecrated. The Christian is not to give a fragmentary or mutilated sacrifice to God, but is to dedicate to Him the whole man. The apostle is strongly opposed to all asceticism for its own sake, and particularly to the immorality which under the name of self-denial had already begun to be practised in the Christian communities. He says we are to use the world as not abusing it. We may fairly gather from his words that after all life was given not for suppression but for expression—the world for use and not for abuse. Affection, sorrow, gladness, work have all their legitimate place in the Christian life. Let no one think he is a better man because he cuts himself off from the common joys and the common sorrows of the great human world. The moment, indeed, these threaten the higher life, the moment we have become the slave of our interests, enjoyments or possessions, that moment we are not using but abusing the world. Renunciation for its own sake is no virtue. But he who denies himself for a higher good, for the sake of his own or another's spiritual well-being, has risen superior to the world and become the master of his impulses and affections. There is no merit

in celibacy or despising earthly joy of any kind in itself; but all honour to those who, recognizing that they are called to a service they could not otherwise adequately fulfil, refrain from wedded life or other joys. And so we do not think we are forcing the apostle's meaning if we interpret his teaching thus—use the world for the highest and noblest ends of life. Let its relationships, pleasures and pursuits be merely the vehicles of spiritual service, the instruments which make you a fit subject of the kingdom of God to which you belong. The time is short, the fashion of the world passeth away. For the Christian it is a small matter whether the transitory things around him yield immediate gratification or not, but it is of infinite importance whether he is so using the world, so extracting the good from this present life as to prepare his soul for its ultimate and abiding home.

III.

The Christian's attitude to *worldly affairs* also naturally falls within this chapter. The apostle, as we might expect, sets a lower value upon earthly goods than on spiritual gifts. "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?"¹ If the Gentiles have been made partakers of the Hebrews' spiritual things, their duty plainly is to minister unto them in material things.² They are getting far more than they give. Paul rests his claim and that of all preachers of the Gospel to be supported by the people, not upon the grounds of ordinary gratitude merely, but upon the principle of remuneration everywhere observed in human affairs. The labourer is worthy of his hire. Every man ought to have a reasonable return

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 11.

² Rom. xv. 27.

for his toil, whether he works with his hands or his mind. This is a law universally recognized. The soldier does not go to war at his own cost, but expects to be maintained by those for whom he fights. The vine-dresser, the shepherd, the labourer expects that his toil will secure for him the comforts and necessities of life. If this is the case with regard to the various kinds of physical labour in which men are engaged, much more should it be true of spiritual service. If any one should object that these secular principles have no application to spiritual matters, Paul has his answer ready. "Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.'" This, says the apostle, is the law of work—both secular and sacred. While Paul urged the claims of support and remuneration, he did not himself take advantage of them. "I have used none of these things that it should be so done unto me; for it were better for me to die than that any man should make my glorying void." But he does not regard his self-denial as meritorious. He has no desire to appear more disinterested than other men. His fear is that if he took remuneration he should "hinder the Gospel of Christ." Large incomes were made in Paul's day by Stoic teachers and professors of philosophy, who attracted disciples and initiated them into their doctrines. Paul was determined that he should not be mistaken for one of these.¹ Hence he laboured at his craft of tent-making that he might not be a burden upon any. At the same time he maintains the principle of support, not as a charity, but as a right, and while he will not accept payment for himself he valiantly pleads the cause of others.

But while Paul recognizes and justifies the possession

¹ Dods, *Expos. Bible*, "Corinthians," p. 204.

of *worldly goods* (2 Cor. ix. 8-9) he reminds Christians that such things are only secondary. They are not to set their affections upon the things of this earth,¹ as do the enemies of the Cross.² They are to possess as though they possessed not.³ They are to be outwardly free from earthly possessions, to know both how to be abased and how to abound, how to have abundance and how to suffer need.⁴ To have sufficiency so that he may abound in every good work is the only consideration that ought to weigh with a Christian.⁵ To hoard is not to have, and the world is possessed by those who are not possessed by it. To have in order to give is the real significance of wealth. Life is true riches, and money is only a good in so far as it is a vehicle of service. The apostle takes high ground, and lays down the principle of possession for all time. Of the community of goods there is no suggestion in Paul's epistles. He knows nothing of Communistic regulations. "Let each man," he says, "do according as he hath purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity."⁶ "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper."⁷ "We commend and exhort in the Lord Jesus that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."⁸ The Communism of the day of Pentecost, like the gift of tongues, "was a spontaneous, unique, and unrepeated manifestation of the elevation and unity of spirit which possessed the little company in the first glow of their new faith";⁹ and the sharing of each other's possessions was no formal or compulsory system. While Paul preached the essential equality of all men in

¹ Col. iii. 2.² Phil. iii. 18.³ 1 Cor. vii. 29.⁴ Phil. iv. 12.⁵ 2 Cor. ix. 8.⁶ 2 Cor. ix. 7.⁷ 1 Cor. xvi. 2.⁸ 2 Thess. iii. 12.⁹ Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 24.

Christ, he did not seek to abolish distinctions of rich and poor; still less in any way to interfere with the existing forms of productive industry.

No adjustment was to be effected except such as was based upon love. The apostle proposes no demonstration of fraternity, except beneficence practised by each in proportion to his means.¹ Wealth is a trust committed by God to men, like other gifts, to be used for the highest ends and in accordance with the highest motives. Here, as everywhere, Christ is at once the supreme motive and example. Jesus did not give money, but He gave Himself. Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich.² In the spirit of Christ the Corinthians are urged to give. Love is the essence of sacrifice. The form is a secondary thing. It was life itself in Christ's case. It was money in theirs: the one thing needful was a love like His, which was the desire to give and to bless.³ Though the poor were at first in the vast majority among the Gentile Christians, yet rich and even well-to-do people were not wanting in such a Church as Corinth, as we may gather from the Apostle's references to the differences in means and in the corresponding style of living, which threatened to become destructive of brotherly feeling and even of fellowship at the Lord's table.⁴ While there is generally an absence in the epistles of warning against the dangers of wealth, the apostle does denounce active self-seeking, stigmatizing covetousness (*πλεονεξία*) as idolatry, and placing it among the sins of the flesh.⁵ He also associates extortion, the unjust overreaching of one's neighbour, with

¹ See Weizsäcker, *Apostolic Age*, vol. ii. 381. ² 2 Cor. viii. 9.

³ F. W. Robertson, *Expository Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 394.

⁴ Weizsäcker, vol. ii. p. 381.

⁵ Col. iii. 5.

theft.¹ But it is no part of his purpose to denounce wealth in itself, or to extol the want of it: and it is contrary to his robust and independent spirit to regard poverty as a test of holiness, or to decry prosperity as a barrier to the kingdom of God. He himself will be a charge upon no man. He welcomes the gifts that were sent to him by the Philippian Church "as a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."² He bids Timothy charge the rich "that they do good, that they be rich in good works."³ Finally, in his fullest summary of Christian character, he explicitly states that the renunciation of wealth does not necessarily imply goodness or generosity of life. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor . . . and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."^{4 5}

Paul recognizes the legitimacy of *trade* as an indispensable means of support, and, by implication, all secular work finds a place in the moral ideal of life. On account of special dangers in the Church of Thessalonica, Paul found it needful to deduce from the Gospel the true attitude of the Christian to work generally. In the first epistle, the whole exposition bearing on this subject⁶ is governed by the idea of brotherly love, just as the injunction in Ephesians "to give to him that needeth" is dominated by the same motive. In the second epistle, the exhortation, "that with quietness they work and eat their own bread" is based rather upon the laudable desire which every right-minded man ought to have, to be independent, "not chargeable to any."⁷ These two motives—self-help and the help of others—are united in the later epistle to the Ephesians: "Let him that stole

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 10. ² Phil. iv. 18. ³ 1 Tim. vi. 18. ⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

⁵ Cp. Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 196.

⁶ 1 Thess. iv. 11 ff.

⁷ 2 Thess. iii. 8, 10, 12.

steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his own hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."¹ The principles laid down in these passages are the more impressive, because they were written as a corrective of a pietistic contempt of work which was springing up in various Christian communities. Paul insists on labour as the condition, not of helpfulness only, but even of all self-respect. The Christian is "to do his own business and to work with his hands, that he may walk honestly towards them that are without, and may have need of nothing" (1 Thess. iv. 11, 12). He has a duty to perform "in the affairs of this life" (2 Tim. ii. 3), but in doing it he is not to be *entangled* in them. They are means, not ends; to be used as helps and not as hindrances. The Christian is to remember that before all else he is a "soldier of Jesus Christ," and if the affairs of life become entanglements instead of opportunities, he will lose that state of constant preparedness and alertness which is the indispensable condition of success in the service to which he has been called.² Further than this the apostle does not go. There is in the epistles no apotheosis of work. That daily toil, irrespective of its consequences, is a sacred calling in itself Paul does not expressly state, and there is no elaboration of the modern idea that all labour has a moral worth in the civilization of the world and the development of its resources. The fact is that, according to the apostle, the one supreme task of man was the bringing of his fellows to Christ. Everything was to be subservient to that purpose and all secular work had its justification for the Christian only in so far as it afforded him the means of furthering that object.

¹ Eph. iv. 28.

² See Plummer, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 348.

There is one aspect of the personal life or form of behaviour with regard to which Paul does not directly proffer counsel or warning, viz. the attitude of the Christian to *recreation*. This is the more remarkable as amusement in the form of spectacular shows formed a most engrossing occupation in the Greek and Roman communities with which the apostle was acquainted. Recreation enters so largely into modern life, and its legitimacy, and even moral advantage, are now so unquestioningly assumed, that it is difficult for us to realize that there ever was a time when, if not actually condemned, it was regarded as a symptom of worldliness. Yet in the early days of Christianity most forms of pastime, and particularly all theatrical performances, were frowned upon as unworthy of a Christian's regard. Tertullian speaks of the theatre of the Roman city as "the consistory of all uncleanness," and he asks why should it be lawful "to see what it is a sin to do"?¹ Paul is wholly silent on the general subject of recreation, and when he does allude to the games in vogue in his day it is for the sake of illustrating some moral truth or drawing some spiritual analogy. But it is noteworthy that in making these comparisons he does not, as we might expect, utter a word of caution or protest. For it must be remembered that the games and exercises of skill as practised in his day were associated with a class of heathen society with which Paul as a Christian could have no sympathy, and from which it was his earnest desire that his converts should withdraw. At the same time, amusement, if not actually commended, is not condemned by the apostle, and his allusions to the various sports of Greek and Roman cities imply even a certain degree of sympathy, if not approval, as if it did not

¹ Tertullian, *de Spectaculis*, 17.

occur to him that innocent recreation in itself was in any way inconsistent with Christian profession. In his *Life of Paul* Mr. Baring-Gould says that "as Jews the tent-maker and his son abstained from theatrical and gladiatorial shows."¹ But this author makes an exception as regards the circus, and adds that probably Paul "took advantage of having a seat² in the circus, and followed the contest with zest." But it may be argued that if Paul felt free to go to the circus, why should he feel debarred from the other amusements of the amphitheatre. We know that he often takes his illustrations from the foot race and the athletic sports of the stadium. "Is it not obvious," says Sir Wm. Ramsay, "that if we once admit the principle that Paul's illustrations and comparisons give a clue to his own early experiences, it becomes difficult to draw any such hard line of demarcation between the Jewish boy Paul's surroundings in Tarsus and those of the young Greeks."³ Recreation in some form is a legitimate need of human nature, all the more necessary in these days of intense and strenuous life. There is nothing in the Pauline epistles inconsistent with the modern view that a proper balance between labour and recreation is desirable, not only for physical health, but for efficiency of work, and that indeed the mind as well as the body requires restoration, rest, and change of occupation. And it is inconceivable that a man of the broad human sympathies of the apostle would find anything derogatory to Christian behaviour in

¹ *Study of St. Paul*, pp. 51-53.

² "The idea," says Sir W. Ramsay, "that Paul had a seat in the circus by right seems to spring from the mistaken idea that the Roman citizenship and even equestrian rank were gained by Paul's father from his having held office in the city." *Pauline and Other Studies*.

³ *Pauline and Other Studies*, p. 332.

healthy pastime or physical sport. But the present-day craze for amusement, that devotion to sport—too often, as it has been named, “vicarious sport”—which has become the “be all” of existence for a large class of the community would, we cannot but believe, have incurred his strong disapproval, not because pleasure is wrong in itself, but because when made the whole end and purpose of life it destroys its perspective and proportion. Life for the apostle was not a holiday, but a high and holy possession entrusted to man by God, for the use and abuse of which he must give an account. The due care for bodily health and vigour, commendable as it is, must be subordinate to the care of the soul. “Bodily exercise profiteth *a little*, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and that which is to come.”¹ Christianity is a life; and what the Christian is to aim at is a life at once rich and enriching, full of intelligent interests and serviceable pursuits. Speaking generally, it is the duty of the Christian to avoid any habit, mental or bodily, which disturbs the healthful balance of his faculties and does not contribute to the enrichment of his life; and to cultivate sobriety and moderation—*sobriety* which guards a man from drinking too deeply of the intoxicating draught of pleasure, from yielding to the pressure of worldly ease and amusement, from inordinate use of the gifts and enjoyments of life; and *moderation*, which enjoins not only self-restraint in work and recreation, but care in regard to the minutiae of external apparel, personal display, and the luxuries of life² (Phil. iv. 5).

In this connection we may notice, in conclusion, the

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 8.

² Cp. Ottley, *Christian Ideas and Ideals*, p. 280; also, William Law, *A Serious Call*, chap. 18; also Polonius's advice to Laertes in *Hamlet*.

apostle's advice with regard to *contentment with one's station in life*. Three times within the compass of a few verses the injunction is repeated ; " Let everyone wherein he is called therein abide with God." ¹ In our day it is regarded as a praiseworthy aim that each should try to better himself, as the phrase goes ; and in any case each is recommended to seek to attain that position in life for which he feels he is qualified by natural gift or education. It is questionable, however, if the apostle here actually desired to set up a general ethical standard with reference to the various vocations of life. Proper ambition, the endeavour to make the most of oneself, in the appropriation of the materials of our earthly existence, is not within the apostle's purview. The aspiration of the spirit, the desire to grow upwards, to reach the best life available, is a legitimate ambition which Paul would have been the last to condemn. In accordance with the general tone of the New Testament, the vocation of the brave, large-minded apostle is to pass on towards the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ, and he bids others so run that they may obtain. The object of the injunction before us is to dissuade men and women who have entered upon the Christian life from wishing to change their sphere. The reason of this is not difficult to see. When a man became a Christian it was not unnatural that he should desire to alter his outward circumstances, so that he might make a complete break with his former life. This was specially the case with regard to the slave. He was apt to imagine that in bondage he might be called upon to do many things inconsistent with his faith. But that was not the only condition which a Christian might desire to change. A believer might be disposed to think that it was his or her

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 17-24.

duty to separate from an unbelieving wife or husband. Or a Jew might wish to attain to the status of a Gentile, or a Gentile to that of a Jew. Paul indeed mentions these three cases, and to each he says: "Be content to be as you are. In whatsoever condition you were before God first called you to Himself, therein remain." This advice of the apostle was discreet and salutary. He had no desire to play the part of a revolutionary, stirring men up to discontent and lawlessness. He did not conceive it to be his mission to denounce slavery, or in any way to meddle with the existing order of society. Nowhere does he, by word or deed, in the slightest degree, interfere with the externals of social life. He lets slavery, war, the tyranny of the Roman Empire, alone, not surely because he regarded them as satisfactory, but because he believed in first making the tree good and then the fruit would follow. Not by violent opposition, but by gradual diffusion, would the spirit of liberty and enlightenment ultimately leaven the world. To the individual, therefore, he says: "Do not trouble yourself about your external circumstances. Keep your Christian profession where you are." If a man is a Christian, it matters very little what his outward life is. In every sphere there is ample scope for Christlike service. The man of Christ is raised above all external conditions and relationships. For he that is called in the Lord, being a slave, is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's slave.¹

The particulars which we have considered in this chapter have all to do with the individual as such, but as a matter of fact the individual for Paul was only a part of a larger whole, and the real significance of all these ethical duties rests in this, that the individual thereby

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 22.

becomes capable of fulfilling his ideal in relation to others. While the expression *ἀγιασμός*, which betokens the sum of the moral life, is invariably employed by the apostle in reference to the individual,¹ there is little doubt that the real emphasis of the ideal life is placed by him upon the life of the community, and that only as the individual fulfils his trust as a member of the family, as a part of the body of Christ, and as a servant of God's kingdom does he realize his true vocation.

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 3, 7; 2 Cor. vii. 1.

CHAPTER X

DUTIES IN RELATION TO OTHERS

It is his place in society that makes the individual what he is. He realizes himself by enabling society through him to perform the particular function which is represented by his station and duties.¹ In virtue of his very being man is related to others, and can only live and fulfil his personal ends as he recognizes and respects the rights and needs of his fellow-men. It is scarcely possible to distinguish between what are called egoistic and altruistic motives. In striving after our own good we may effect the good of others, and in seeking others' good we benefit ourselves. Physicists tell us that there is no isolated point in the universe, that every element in the corporeal world stands in reciprocal relation with every other. And in like manner there is no isolated point in the moral world. Every act of every man influences the entire moral universe, and every act in the moral universe reacts upon every individual. This principle was early perceived by Greek philosophy and is clearly recognized both by Plato and Aristotle. It is true a man may seek to maintain himself in isolated independence, he may refuse to be compromised by social relations and seek to live for himself alone. But in doing so he takes the

¹ Bradley, *Ethical Studies*.

surest way to defeat his own end and to miss the very good he seeks. To seek life in this sense is to lose it. On the other hand, a man can only find personal salvation as he humbly fulfils the duties which his calling, family, and country impose upon him.

This truth is clearly recognized by St. Paul. No man, he says, liveth to himself alone. We belong to others: others belong to us. They and we alike are parts of a larger whole. Members of a social organism, we only find our true life and purpose as we draw our strength from and contribute our strength to the corporate body to which we belong. But while the apostle recognizes this natural principle, and more than once alludes to its working, it is significant that here, as always, he inculcates the duty of the recognition and service of others, not upon naturalistic grounds, but upon Christian. The natural is spiritualized, and all the human desires and appetencies which link us to our fellow-men are elevated and transmuted through our relation to Christ into vehicles of a higher life and fellowship. If St. Paul makes little of self-love as a distinct duty of the Christian, it is not because he disparages personality, but because he believes that in the love of others the individual truly finds himself. In relation to others love, which is of the very essence of the Christian life, has at once its scope and exercise. Love is a mutual appropriation. In it my neighbour becomes mine and I his. By its exercise I enlarge both my own life-sphere and that of my neighbour. In the reciprocity and service of love the social organism as a whole, as well as each individual member of it, finds its realization.

In this chapter we shall endeavour to present the apostle's teaching with regard to the Christian's duties to others; and first we shall discuss briefly the nature and

ground of brotherly love generally, and, second, consider some of its more important manifestations.

I.

The Nature and Ground of Brotherly Love. The law of love is presented by Christ as the highest of all commands, and the love of one's neighbour is the substance of all moral duties towards one's fellow-men. In the Gospel the social command follows immediately from the first commandment of love to God. It is the application towards men of the same principle of love which underlies the obligation of man to God. In the ethics of the New Testament, in Christ's teaching and in that of the apostle's, both obligations of love towards God and man are derived directly from the fundamental principle of God's love towards men. Men are to act as brethren because One is their Father in heaven.¹ The Christian principle of the moral law, both in its range and sanction, is summed up in the profound word of St. John, "We love Him because He first loved us."² It is on the fact that God is love,³ and that the Christian is to reproduce in himself the feelings and activities of God that the obligation to brotherly love is based. It is not that we are to love God and also to love our fellow-men, but we are to love our fellow-men in God. The love of our neighbour is not a secondary something super-added to our love to God. The latter completes itself in the former, and is not existent where the former is not.⁴

It was thus that Christ Himself grounded His attitude of service. His relations with men were what they were because of His relations with God. We cannot read the

¹ Matt. xxiii. 8-9.

² 1 John iv. 19 (R.V.).

³ 1 John iv. 16.

⁴ Haering, *The Ethics of the Christian Life*, p. 139.

Gospels without feeling that what Jesus did for men, all His acts of kindness and mercy, flowed directly from His perfect surrender to the divine life, came spontaneously from His union with the Father. The moving impulse in His self-sacrifice lay primarily in His relation of utter obedience to His Father's will, and His love to man was at once the consequence and expression of His intimate union with God.¹

In a similar manner St. Paul grounds brotherly love upon the new relationship which the Christian bears to God through Christ. We ought to love one another, he says, as Christ has loved us and given His life for us. As in the love of Christ everything individual and particular, every privilege and advantage resting upon diversity among men is set aside, and the universal element only is recognized, so love to Christ in us becomes the one bond of fellowship among men, for whom without distinction Christ died.² From the moment we begin to live in Christ, who died and rose again for us, we know no man after the flesh.³ Having put on the new man, there is for us no longer "Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but Christ is all and in all."⁴ In the new life in Christ our love to others finds its impulse and manifestation. It is this union with Him which transforms what would otherwise be but a natural instinct of sympathy into a service of love, and extracts from altruistic activity all self-seeking and striving after personal reward, advantage, or honour.⁵ We are members one of another, says the apostle, and love is the bond of perfectness. "We are to owe no man anything

¹ Cf. H. W. Clarke, *The Christian Method of Ethics*, p. 160 ff.

² Rom. xiv. 15; 1 Cor. viii. 11. ³ 2 Cor. v. 16. ⁴ Col. iii. 10, 11.

⁵ 1 Cor. ix. 1-18; 2 Cor. xi. 7-10; 1 Thess. ii. 5, 6.

but love; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."¹ "Let all your things be done with charity," he writes to the Corinthians; while his prayer for the Church of Thessalonica is that the Lord may make them increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men.

The primary trait of love towards others is unselfishness. The individual must not think of himself merely, he is not to seek his own;² not to look every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.³ He is to have regard to his desires;⁴ his rights;⁵ his liberty,⁶ if thereby he may be able to serve the highest interests of his brethren. He is to be prepared, in short, to sacrifice himself, as the apostle himself was ready to do, for the good of others, for Christ's sake.⁷

This relation of the individual to Christ, which is the true ground of love to others, defines at once its extent and limits. In Christ all distinctions which in other respects separate men are dissolved. Love to others is a universal love. As no man is excluded from Christ, so no man must be beyond our regard. As we have opportunity, Paul writes to the Galatians, let us do good unto all men. At the same time, in so far as Christians are more immediately associated with those of their own community, those who share their faith, their love is to be specially directed to them. They are to do good, especially to those who are of the household of faith.⁸ It is therefore pre-eminently Brotherly love, *φιλadelphία*,⁹ which the apostle, in the first instance, commends. The activity of Christians is not, indeed, to be confined to

¹ Rom. xiii. 8.² 1 Cor. x. 24-33; 1 Cor. xiii. 5.³ Phil. ii. 4.⁴ Phil. i. 21-26.⁵ 1 Cor. ix. 12.⁶ 1 Cor. x. 23.⁷ 1 Cor. iv. 10, 13.⁸ Gal. vi. 10.⁹ Rom. xii. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 9.

those of their own persuasion, but they deserve their first affection, and though sympathy is to be withheld from none, and efforts are to be made to bring all to a knowledge of the truth, still, in the nature of things, it would be unreasonable to expect that their intercourse with the enemies of Christ can be so intimate and affectionate as with His friends. Indeed, there are those, Paul suggests, whom it is desirable to avoid, those with whom it would serve no good purpose to hold communication.¹ He even goes the length of commanding the Thessalonians, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, "to withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly."² For, as he says to the Corinthians, what communication hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial?³ "Have no fellowship," he writes to the Ephesians, "with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."⁴

II.

So far we have been discussing the nature and ground of brotherly love according to the apostle. We now proceed to examine in more detail its *chief forms or manifestations* in human society.

1. *Justice* obviously is the first and most fundamental form of Christian love in its social manifestation. In any code of ethics worthy of the name, whether definitely Christian or not, this is recognized as the supreme virtue man owes to his fellows, although the content of the term varies. The higher the plane of such a system of ethics, the larger and more adequate is the conception of what justice implies. Especially noteworthy is Plato's

¹ Rom. xvi. 17.

² 2 Thess. iii. 6.

³ 2 Cor. vi. 14-18.

⁴ Eph. v. 7, 11.

delineation of the just man compelled to die on account of his firmness in cleaving to justice, a martyr for righteousness' sake. In the Old Testament, and pre-eminently in the writings of the prophets, an essential element of true religion is to do justly.¹ The Priestly Code provided carefully for the observance of justice between man and man. This ancient love of justice in the Hebrew race is in deep and essential harmony with the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. The tendency of modern ethical systems is to regard justice as devotion to the great ends and aims of humanity, the realization of the perfect social state. In this comprehensive sense it goes beyond the narrower meaning which in Christian ethics it more generally receives. In the Christian love of our neighbour the virtue of justice consists, first of all, *in respect for others*. This implies proper regard for all that our neighbour possesses of natural gifts and for the moral position to which he has attained in life, whether as the result of Christian influence or otherwise. For it is God who has given to each his natural capacity as means for the highest good. This Christian consideration for others finds expression in St. Peter's injunction to "honour all men," and in the closely allied precept of St. Paul, "in honour preferring one another."² It is the humanity in all men that the Christian is to respect. As Kant would have said, it is reverence for the worth of man as man which is the first real principle of morality—respect for the law which is within each man.³ This virtue of respect regarded on its other side is modesty, thinking soberly of oneself.⁴ All true self-love, as we have already seen, involves an affirmation of one's

¹ Micah vi. 8.

² Rom. xii. 10.

³ Kant, *Metaphysic of Morals* (Abbott's Trans.), p. 313.

⁴ Rom. xii. 3.

own worth. In respecting others, we really respect ourselves. We are to see in others the possibility of the manhood which we would realize in our own lives. Looking at another's character helps us rightly to estimate our own, and conversely. "Be of the same mind one towards another; mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own esteem."¹ For love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.²

Negatively, this duty of justice towards men takes the form of refraining from everything in thought, word, or act that may injure our neighbour. After enumerating the commandments, "thou shalt not," the apostle adds, "love worketh no ill to his neighbour."³ Covetousness, stealing, lying, as well as all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice,⁴ are to be put far from us. *Positively*, justice freely yields everything which our neighbour has a right to claim, especially that deference and honour which men in their various ranks and positions in life owe to one another. Writing to the Romans, who might naturally feel the irksomeness of observing those ranks and distinctions which formed a marked feature of Roman officialism, Paul says: "Render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."⁵ Religion does not absolve you from the common duties which are demanded of you in your several stations. Let it never be said that Christians are less dutiful than others or are lacking in those observances which are imposed by the social and political constitution to which they belong. In regard to the legal relationships in which Christians stand to others,

¹ Rom. xii. 16.² 1 Cor. xiii. 4.³ Rom. xiii. 10.⁴ Eph. iv. 25-31.⁵ Rom. xiii. 7.

they are not only to act with honesty, but with a proper sense of loyalty and uprightness.¹ Let there be integrity in the minutest details. Let no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter.² While the master is to have regard to justice and fairness, not showing favouritism or partiality, the servant is to render obedience, not with eye-service, as a man-pleaser, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.³

Here perhaps we can best consider the apostolic injunction to Christian men not to go to law with one another before heathen judges. Let them settle their own disputes among themselves, he says to the Corinthians.⁴ The Greeks were naturally a litigious people. "They were not only quarrelsome, but they seemed to derive an excitement pleasant to their frivolous nature in the suspense and uncertainty of cases before the courts."⁵ The Corinthian converts, it would seem, had not discarded this taste, and were in danger, through the exercise of this habit, not only of marring the feeling of brotherhood which ought to exist among Christians, but by their unseemly wrangling of bringing disrepute upon their religion. There was, to his mind, something incongruous in a brother going to law with a brother. What was their profession of brotherhood worth if Christians could not suffer a little wrong and exercise some degree of mutual forbearance? Besides, what would the heathen think of them if they must call in the unbeliever to settle their disputes? As the real cause of all such litigiousness is the spirit of enmity, so he sees that the real cure of wrangling lies not in any outward restraint that can be laid on the wrongdoer, but in meekness,

¹ Col. iv. 1.

² 1 Thess. iv. 6.

³ Col. iii. 22; iv. 1.

⁴ 1 Cor. vi. 1-11.

⁵ Dods, 1 Ep. to Cor. *Expositor's Bible*, p. 131.

gentleness, and unworldliness on the part of those who suffer wrong.

This apostolic injunction, while it was obviously appropriate on account of both the novel social condition of the early Christians and the character of the heathen law courts, can scarcely be regarded as a precept of universal validity. In all civilized communities there now exists an established order of justice, and in the complex condition of social and commercial life of the present day there are cases which can be dealt with and decided only before proper legal tribunals instituted for the purpose. The spirit of the precept, however, remains good for all time; and if there was more Christian forbearance and less desire to insist upon one's rights and proceed to extremities, much injustice and wrong would be prevented or removed. It may be needful at times for the Christian to contend for justice, and even to maintain his private rights; but, as Höffding has observed, "it marked a great ethical advance when for the first time the position was taken, it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong."¹

But justice, in the apostle's view, is not confined to acts. Speech and thought must be just also. Brotherly love is manifested in *truthfulness* and in right perceptions and judgments.² We owe to others veracity. Speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.³ Even when the motive is good there can be no greater social disservice than to fail in truthfulness. "The well-meant lie builds up a sham world, whose ruins may bury the fool that planned it as well as the weakling for whom it was planned."⁴ Lying is not only unjust to others—a social disservice—it is unjust

¹ *Ethik*, p. 412.

² Phil. i. 9, 10.

³ Eph. iv. 25.

⁴ Mackintosh, *Christian Ethics*, p. 133.

to ourselves—a wrong to the deeper self, the new man in Christ. “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man.”¹ As has been often pointed out, it is possible to lie without words, by acts, gestures, or even by silence. Equivocation, dissimulation, exaggeration or suppression of facts, are all covered by the apostolic command; and perhaps even, as has been suggested, unsound workmanship, shoddy, veneer of every description, as well as hypocrisy, unreality, and counterfeiting. The practice of deceit was not uncommon among the Greeks, though fidelity to oaths was regarded by them as the most elementary part of justice and perjury as the most heinous of crimes.² Veracity could scarcely be said to be a prominent Hebrew virtue. There was therefore abundant need for Paul’s insistence upon this primary duty among the semi-barbarian inhabitants of Ephesus and Colosse, who had but recently been converted to the new faith. Kant reckons veracity among the duties to self, and regards falsehood as the abandonment of one’s dignity as a man. But while it is undoubtedly true, truthfulness is also an essential element of justice to others. All human intercourse is based upon veracity, and falsehood not only poisons at their source all moral and spiritual relationships, but also undermines the foundations of the social world.

We have already by implication answered a question which has been discussed by nearly all moralists and elaborately treated in most works on general ethics, viz. whether a falsehood is ever permissible. Is deception under all circumstances morally wrong? or can conditions arise under which it is allowable or even necessary? Many distressing cases of conscience have been cited in

¹ Col. iii. 9, 10.

² See Schmidt, *Ethik der Griechen*, vol. ii. pp. 3-5.

which the duties of love and truth conflict. Ethical writers have taken opposite sides upon this perplexing question. Augustine and Calvin, Kant and Fichte are uncompromising in their attitude against the "lie of necessity." Chrysostom, Jerome, Luther, Martensen, Paulsen and Newman Smyth, among many others, admit its adoption in extreme and exceptional cases; although Martensen rather illogically remarks that, though permissible on account of the weakness of human nature, "there is some sin in every such falsehood."¹ The instance of war is frequently referred to, in which strategy and deception are among its essential arts. Cases in which some one dear to us is exposed to the consequences of wrongdoing from which a lie would rescue him or her sometimes arise. Two examples taken from literature are frequently quoted as illustrations of the opposite modes of dealing with this problem. On the one side there is the case of Jeanie Deans in Sir Walter Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*, who will not tell a lie to save her sister's life, and on the other that of Desdemona in Shakespeare's *Othello*, who to save her husband's honour dies with a lie upon her lips. Rousseau says somewhere that the strictest morality costs nothing upon paper. There will be no one who will not honour Jeanie Deans; but dare we condemn others who have felt themselves forced to act differently? Perhaps no command can be carried out literally to its utmost limit. Situations arise in practical life where commands equally imperative seem to come into conflict with one another, and the individual conscience must decide each case as it occurs. Truth is not always expressed by verbal accuracy or categorical statement. Fiction and poetry are often truer than fact, and there are obviously cases (*e.g.* those of

¹ *Christian Ethics*, vol. ii. p. 264.

children, weak-minded and aged) in which accommodation may not only be morally defensible, but give evidence of a truer attitude of heart and mind than mere literal pronouncement. Still, when all is said, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in the last analysis lack of truth in any circumstances argues a deficient trust in the ultimate veracities and goodness of the universe, rests, indeed, upon a practical unbelief in Divine Providence, which can make "all things" work together for good to those who love God. We need not always speak. But when moral interests demand we must speak truth, although always wisely and under the motive of love. The apostle does not discuss the question. It is enough for him to lay down the general maxim—speak the truth in love¹ where the emphasis is on both the nouns. Courage is to exist side by side with kindliness. Love is to be the element in which truth is to be spoken, and speaking truth is to be a manifestation of love. Tact, courtesy, graciousness, consideration, simple fairness, combined with loyalty to all high interests, the avoidance of flattery on the one hand and harshness on the other, are all embraced and harmonized in this beautiful apostolic maxim.

Closely connected with truthfulness is the duty of forming *just judgments* of our fellow-men. It is no easy matter fairly and correctly to estimate human character. Life is so complex, the motives which actuate men are so diverse and mixed, intention and performance so different, that it is as difficult to know others as it is to know ourselves. Yet as social beings knit together by manifold ties it is impossible to avoid the task of judging, nor is it desirable that we should shirk it. We, who are many, are one body in Christ and severally members one

¹ Eph. iv. 15.

of another.¹ Self-judging is an ethical necessity for our own good, judging of others indispensable for others' good, and the good of the whole. Only thus can a high and vigorous tone be maintained and apathy avoided; for, as the apostle told the lethargic Corinthians, if we judged ourselves we should not be judged.² When Paul writes to the Romans, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ,"³ it is censoriousness, flippant criticism, contemptuousness, which he condemns, and not enlightened moral judgment. There were two sets of Christians in Rome. One party were scrupulous about the observance of days and things. The other claimed to be liberal and broad-minded, esteeming all days alike, and believing they might eat all things. The narrow Christians condemned their freer brethren for doing those things from which they refrained. On the other hand, the enlightened Christians despised the bigotry and narrowness of the more scrupulous, and even went the length of insulting their feelings by a wanton indulgence in those things which they condemned. Paul reproves both parties, and lays down the broad principle which forbids all uncharitable judgment and contemptuousness. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. He asserts the supremacy of the individual conscience, and bids both parties "no more judge one another, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion of fall in his brother's way." The sin of judging is the sin of the narrow-minded. But the sin of the liberal-minded, which is equally reprehensible, is the sin of contempt. Though in this passage the apostle seems to deal only with the

¹ Rom. xii. 5.² 1 Cor. xi. 31.³ Rom. xiv. 10.

negative side of judging, he does not mean that at no time or in no circumstances are we to condemn a brother's conduct when it is wrong or commend it when it is right. Elsewhere, in writing to the Corinthians, he says that it is the spiritual man who is the true judge; and the one condition of forming a proper estimate of our brother is to have the mind of Christ.¹ We must endeavour to dismiss all prejudice, partiality and passion—judging a man not by earthly standards or private feelings. We are to judge, not according to appearance merely, but according to motive, intention and aspiration, taking a man at his best and not at his worst. Above all, we are to be sympathetic, putting ourselves in the position of our brother, and seeking to realize the full force of the temptations to which he is exposed. From want of sympathy we are apt to pass severer judgments upon an offender than are really deserved. His sins are not ours, and therefore we deal unsparingly with them, and thereby transgress the apostolic injunction, “Even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in a spirit of meekness: looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”² From want of sympathy also we grow intolerant and impatient, ready to condemn an opponent because he is our opponent, and to accuse him of misdeeds because he does not see things from our point of view. In our estimate of others, love, which is the soul of justice, is the condition and safeguard of proper judgment—“for love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”³

2. *Goodness.* Love towards others evinces itself also in goodness or kindness. *χρηστότης* is used of the goodness of God in Rom. xii. 22, while it is used of man

¹ 1 Cor. ii. iii.

² Gal. vi. 1.

³ 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

in 2 Cor. vi. 6, and translated kindness. Be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted (*γίνεσθε δὲ εἰς ἀλλήλους χρηστοί, εὖσπλαγχνοί*), writes the apostle to the Ephesians.¹ Kindness may be distinguished from goodness, as a potency is from an active principle, yet the distinction is not carefully observed by the apostle. In general it is a kindly disposition of heart towards men, and a sympathetic endeavour, according to one's ability, to promote their good. It is an essential element of love. This was a characteristic trait of Christ, and, both in speech and action, is a mark of the Christian. It takes the twofold form of *Sympathy* and *Service*.

(1) In the form of *Sympathy* it is a readiness to enter into the experiences of others. "Charity suffereth long and is kind; it rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth," "weeping with those that weep, and rejoicing with those that rejoice." It is, however, no mere natural instinct, but grows out of the Christian consciousness of organic union in the body of Christ. "When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it."² A thrill of joy or sorrow runs through the whole spiritual community, and we are participators in each other's gladness and grief. Paul himself presents a fine instance of this delicate sympathy. His is the care of all the churches, and his sensitive heart responds to every experience of his brethren. Nothing that concerns them is a matter of indifference to him. If he hears of their advancement in grace, he is lifted up; if he learns of their declension, he is cast down.³ Their gain is his, their loss is his also. The varying spiritual fortunes of the whole Christian society are mirrored in his soul, and constitute a real and vital part of his own personal life.

¹ Eph. iv. 32.

² 1 Cor. xii. 26.

³ 1 Cor. i. 4; Rom. x. 2; 2 Cor. ii. 1-5; Phil. iii. 14.

(2) *Service* or practical beneficence is the natural outcome of sympathy. Those who are redeemed by the love of Christ become agents of love, ministers who gladly dispense the riches of His grace to others. In this gracious ministry the Christian is to be ready, as Paul tells the Corinthians he himself was, "to spend and be spent," dedicating to it all his endowments and possessions.¹ We are to serve one another in love, using the liberty into which we have been called not for self-gratification, but for others' good.² Ever follow that which is good, the Apostle writes to the Thessalonians, both among yourselves and to all men.³ It is not enough to refrain from seeking his own, every man must also seek another's wealth.⁴ A tender consideration will characterize the Christian. Privileges which a man has a right to enjoy, he will gladly forego, even as Paul himself did, if thereby he can advance the spiritual weal of his brethren.⁵ This ministering love is to be exercised even in those circumstances in which one is tempted to return evil for evil, or exact vengeance.⁶ The Christian is to minister even to the needs of his enemy, giving him meat and drink. In short, the Christian, like his Master, is not to be overcome of evil, but is to overcome evil with good.⁷ In this all-embracing principle the whole duty of the man of Christ in his relations with others is summed up.

The ministry of love extends over the whole realm of life, and varies with every phase of need. Physical necessities are to be met in the spirit of love. Paul pleads repeatedly the cause of the poor and distressed, and commends eloquently the grace of liberality. Giving

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 7.

² Gal. v. 13.

³ 1 Thess. v. 15.

⁴ 1 Cor. x. 24.

⁵ 1 Cor. ix. 4-12.

⁶ Rom. xii. 17, 19.

⁷ Rom. xii. 20.

is to be marked by simplicity and cheerfulness. There is to be no stinting or grudging. "See that ye abound," he says, "in this grace also."¹

"Give all thou canst, high heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely calculated less or more."²

But there are needs which material aid cannot meet—disappointment, desolation, anxiety, grief—to which only love can minister. The apostle, therefore, tells the Corinthians that the true way to administer comfort is to employ their own experience of comfort, and to seek to heal their brothers' sorrow with that same consolation with which they themselves were comforted of God.³

But beyond all physical and moral need is the need of the soul, and it is characteristic of Paul's whole view of man's destiny that he lays the emphasis in the matter of service upon the spiritual life. It is the duty of those who have experienced the grace of Christ to administer it to others, to seek the conversion (2 Cor. viii. 9), the edification (Rom. xi. 19), and the spiritual enrichment of their brethren. Love edifieth (1 Cor. viii. 1), and the task, to fulfil which must be the endeavour of each, is to edify or build up the Church (1 Cor. xiv. 12). Paul exhorts the Romans to follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another.⁴ We are to do good to all, but specially "let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification, remembering here as always the example of Christ who pleased not Himself."⁵

This duty of edification is to take various forms of comfort to the distressed and feeble-minded, of warning

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 7; ix. 7; Col. iii. 12.

² Wordsworth.

³ 1 Cor. i. 4.

⁴ Rom. xiv. 19.

⁵ Rom. xv. 2, 3; 1 Thess. v. 11.

especially towards the unruly,¹ of support, of patience and meekness, towards the fallen,² and, above all, of instruction, teaching and admonishing.³

In all these matters the rule which the apostle lays down is, that the Christian is to cultivate the spirit of unselfishness, and instead of regulating his conduct according to his own freedom only, or confining himself to his own view of things, he is to have regard for the feelings and convictions of others. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful, but all things edify not.⁴ The great thing to remember is, that we are to seek the good of others, even becoming all things to all men, considering others' weaknesses and prejudices, and taking care to hurt the conscience of no one or in any way to create doubt.⁵ In the matter of instructing others, we are to adapt our teaching to their capacity, as Paul shows by his own example when he tells the Corinthians that he fed them with milk, and not with meat, because they were but babes in Christ, and were not able to bear the stronger nourishment.⁶

Both directly and indirectly we may seek to minister to the good of others.

(1) *Indirectly* we can further the weal of our brethren by *example*—by so living that others shall see our good works, and be imitative of us. It is indeed true that in an absolute sense no one, in so far as each comes short of the perfect life, can present to his neighbour a complete pattern of life. And if Paul bids others be followers of himself, it is only in so far as he was striving for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. And in the same sense he acknowledges that the Thessalonians, in so

¹ 1 Thess. v. 12, 14.

² Gal. vi. 1.

³ Col. iii. 16.

⁴ 1 Cor. x. 23; vi. 12.

⁵ Rom. xiv. 1 ff.

⁶ 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

far as they had received the mind of God, with joy, were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.¹ It is true that example alone must not be the motive of the Christian life. At the same time each must carefully guard his conduct, so that he may not give an occasion of stumbling to others, or in any way weaken his influence for good. "Let no man," writes Paul to Timothy, "despise thy youth, but be thou an example of believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."² Schleiermacher³ raises the question whether we can properly speak of a special duty to give a good example. "Materially," he says, "example is nothing. One should not do for the sake of example what one would not otherwise do; but in everything that one does one cannot but be aware of one's influence." Rothe also says: "With regard to the *contents* of our action, the thought of our influence upon others ought not to weigh with us, but the *form* of our action must be governed by the effects it may have."⁴ This seems to us to be a distinction without a difference. The Christian life must never be merely a means to an end. Much less may it be a theatrical display or ostentatious performance, as with the Pharisees who prayed and gave alms in order to exhibit to others an example of holiness. We are to live a holy life, because it is good in itself and apart from all benefit which may accrue to ourselves or others thereby. Every kind of life tells indeed upon the world, for good or for evil. We cannot withhold our influence. While, therefore, the supreme motive of well-doing must be to please God, to be that which God has called us to be in

¹ 1 Thess. i. 7.

² 1 Tim. iv. 12.

³ Schleiermacher, *Christl. Sitte; Beitr.* s. 142.

⁴ Rothe, *Theol. Ethik.* Bd. iii. s. 459. Rothe follows Fichte in this distinction.

our particular place and calling, it will be both an encouragement to good and a deterrent to evil to know that our conduct is affecting our fellow-men. Often the most effective example is given unconsciously, just as the rose exhales its finest perfume without effort, as the light gives forth its radiance simply by being what it is.

(2) *Directly*, each is to strive according to his ability and opportunity to promote the improvement of his neighbour's spiritual condition by means of *instruction*, exhortation, warning. The exhortation to Timothy, to be instant in season and out of season, refers more especially to him whose office is the care of souls. But the requirement—that we should redeem the time, make use of every opportunity, neglecting no occasion to impress the truth of Christ upon our fellow-men, making ourselves, as Paul did, a servant of all, that we may gain the more—is of universal application.¹ Though Paul in his pastoral epistles gives special advice to those who are more particularly engaged in what we would now call the work of the ministry, he assumes everywhere that the first and most important duty of every man is to bring his brethren to Christ, and that his whole life must be dominated by this aim. In this business we are not to be slothful, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.²

3. Love to others is manifested, lastly, in the form of *Patience*, *μακροθυμία*, which signifies the long-suffering toleration not only of our neighbour's intellectual and moral shortcomings, but of his actual hostility towards our personal views and mode of life. "Charity suffereth long and is kind."³ The duty of the Christian, as Paul reminds Titus, "is to speak evil of no man, but to be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."⁴

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 19.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

³ Rom. xii. 11.

⁴ Titus iii. 2.

Patience may be regarded in its twofold aspect of *forbearance* and *peaceableness*, both of which are commended by the apostle.

(1) *Forbearance* was a marked feature of Paul himself. It is noteworthy that he who was distinguished by a wonderful concentration of zeal and intensity of ardour should insist upon toleration. And it is a further evidence of the wealth and manysidedness of his character that he thus combined in his own person strong vehemence and gentle forbearance. Notwithstanding his uncompromising determination, as exhibited in his withstanding Peter, and his disagreement with Barnabas in reference to Mark,¹ he had a most tender regard for the feelings and prejudices of others. Two modern English writers have dwelt specially upon this feature of the apostle's character. Newman² says "Paul was one of those saints . . . who, while they themselves stand secure in the blessedness of purity and peace, can follow in imagination the ten thousand aberrations of pride, passion, and remorse. . . . The common nature of the whole race of Adam spoke in him with an energetical presence, with a sort of bodily fulness, always under the sovereign command of divine grace, but losing none of its real freedom and power because of its subordination. And the consequence is that, having the same nature so strong within him, he is able to enter into human nature and to sympathize with it, with a gift peculiarly his own." And in similar terms Dean Stanley speaks of the remarkable union of qualities in the character of Paul. "He had that capacity for throwing himself into the position and feelings of others—that intense sympathy in the strength of which, as has been truly said, he had a thousand friends, and loved each as his own soul, and

¹ Acts xv. 36.

² *Sermons on Various Occasions*, p. 106.

seemed to live a thousand lives in them, and died a thousand deaths when he must quit them.”¹ Notwithstanding the manifold plots and misrepresentations of his enemies, Paul preserves a disposition of confident trust. Cognisant of the party strife that is rife at Corinth, he is not suspicious. He readily forgives what was unfair to himself. He writes to the Galatians, “Ye have not injured me at all,”² though at this very time he was apprehensive that through the mischief-making of the Judaizers his labour might be in vain. He is sensitively afraid of causing pain. He called God to record that it was “to spare” his erring converts that he had not visited them when he intended.³ No greater instance of forbearance can be adduced than when he says to Philemon,⁴ “I might have such confidence in Christ as to *command*, but for love’s sake I rather *beseech*.” Influence takes the place of rule, and charity rather than authority holds the sceptre. Perhaps, as Dean Howson says,⁵ “the most remarkable of all the instances of the apostle’s forbearance is the passage in which he speaks of those at Rome who ‘preached the Christ of contention,’ and ‘sought to add affliction to his bonds.’ ‘Notwithstanding,’ he says, ‘everyway, Christ is preached’ and he ‘therein rejoices,’ yea, and ‘will rejoice.’”⁶ We have already noted how he bore with the weakness and ignorance of the Corinthians, adapting his instruction to their capacity, feeding them with the milk of babes instead of strong meat.⁷ To the weak he became as weak that he might gain the weak, and indeed he was

¹ Dean Stanley, *Sermons and Essays on the Apostolic Age*, pp. 167-9.

² Gal. iv. 12.

³ 2 Cor. i. 23.

⁴ Philemon 8, 9.

⁵ Howson, *The Character of St. Paul*, to whom we are indebted for some of the remarks in this section.

⁶ Phil. i. 16, 18.

⁷ 1 Cor. iii. 2.

made all things to all men that he might by all means save some.¹ This spirit of tolerance is further illustrated in the recommendation to the stronger party in Rome that, while maintaining their own Christian liberty, they should bear with the scruples of the weak;² and also in his injunction to deal mercifully with the erring. "Be considerate and forgiving," he writes to the Galatians, "if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness."³

(2) *Peaceableness* is the other aspect of patience which the apostle commends. "If it be possible as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men." This temper discloses itself not only in striving for unity and the avoidance of everything that creates difference and dissension—endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,⁴ but also in the spirit of reconciliation and readiness to forgive, "forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." The Christian is to go even further. "Bless them which persecute you, bless and curse not, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath."⁵ In regulating the intercourse of Christians with unbelievers Paul sets up the simple principle of friendliness, peaceableness and love, even towards slanderers and persecutors, and is thus true to the example of Christ. "As we have opportunity let us do good to all men." He bids his converts think what their heathen neighbours will be likely to say. Consideration for them is to be a spur to every individual to press towards perfection. "The only passage in which he issues a curt command to be entirely separate from the servants of Belial (quoting

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 22.

² Rom. xiv. 1 ff.

³ Gal. vi. 1.

⁴ Phil. ii. 23; Eph. iv. 2.

⁵ Rom. xii. 14, 19.

Old Testament texts in support of what he says) is so entirely without connection with the context that its genuineness has been called in question.”¹ The sagacity of the apostle’s advice to his brethren in various localities cannot but impress us when we remember their close relationship with and dependence upon their unbelieving neighbours in the complex social conditions of the Roman empire. The Christian may associate fearlessly with sinners as long as his conscience does not suffer hurt. Paul would not have a Christian husband or wife separate from an unbelieving partner in life. “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”² They may quietly take part in the activity and intercourse, and even share the hospitality of their heathen neighbours.³ But amid all their earthly associations, at once unavoidable and salutary, they must never forget their high calling, living blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they are to shine like the stars, holding forth the word of life.⁴

What, it may be asked in conclusion, is the real *fons et origo* of this command of love as the sum of the ethical ideal in relation to others? Here we are thrown back upon the norm or standard of moral conduct to which we have already referred. In Galatians v. 6 the apostle lays the foundation of all such behaviour in the unity and equality of all men in Christ. “In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love”; or, as he puts it in the following chapter, “in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”

¹ Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 208.

² 1 Cor. vii. 15, 16.

³ 1 Cor. x. 27.

⁴ Phil. ii. 15.

The old relationships have passed away. The world is crucified. The former differences are annulled. All are one in Christ. The many are members of His body.¹ All stand towards Him in the same relationship. The slave is Christ's freeman: the freeman is His slave. All are redeemed by Christ, who died for all. All are incorporated in the Church of God,² and are therefore brothers of one another. That is the source from which love to our neighbour springs. It is therefore unnatural for a brother to strive with a brother, or to do injury to one for whom Christ died. To sin against our brethren or to wound the conscience of any is to sin against Christ Himself.³

Those who are in Christ are called by the apostle saints, *ἅγιοι*,⁴ and the sacred character they bear in virtue of their common fellowship in Christ is the motive to loving care and affectionate service. All men belong to Christ, the believing actually, and others potentially, and because the Christian seeks only the things of Christ, love must prevail.

¹ Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12.

³ 1 Cor. viii. 10, 11.

² 1 Cor. x. 32; Col. 1. 24.

⁴ Rom. xii. 13; Rom. xv. 25.

CHAPTER XI

DUTIES IN THE SPHERE OF THE FAMILY

THE virtues of the new life bear fruit in action, and manifest themselves in every sphere of human activity. Since Christ is Lord of all, no class of men, no department of life is beyond His jurisdiction. Every possible line of duty for the Christian radiates from one living centre, and falls entirely within the circle of his religious obligations. The department of Christian activity which bulks most largely in Paul's teaching is the life of the Christian community. Yet the apostle does not confine himself to general maxims regarding social service. He defines with considerable minuteness the duties of Christians as members of the particular institutions of the family or household, *οἶκος*, of the state, *πολίτευμα*, and of the church, *ἐκκλησία*.

The natural relationship of the family is the unit of society and the basis of all the wider associations of humanity. The social constitution of Israel was distinguished by the emphasis laid upon the family. The moral education of the Hebrews began with the organic and social group, and only in later ages were the ideas of individual rights developed.¹ Even among more primitive people, as has been shown by Prof. Robertson Smith in

¹ See W. S. Bruce, *Social Aspects of Christian Morality*, p. 49.

his book on *Marriage and Kinship in Arabia*, notwithstanding the lax laws of marriage which existed among early nations, the family relation was regarded as the first source from which all the larger social groups sprung. Whether society actually had its origin after the type of the ancient Roman family, as is suggested by Sir Henry Maine in his *Ancient Law*, or in some more primitive forms, as recent research seems now to have established, there seems little doubt that, whether marriage originally took place by seizure or purchase, the relation of husband and wife, of parents and children, which constitutes the idea of the family, is the basis and starting point of the moral world. Everyone begins his existence in a home. He enters the world, not as an isolated individual, but by descent and generation. In the family each one is cradled and nourished, and through the conditions and influences of the home individual character is shaped and developed. That the family has a profound value for the nation has been universally recognized. History shows that the health or decline of a people is directly traceable to the home life in which its individual men and women have been trained. When the fire on the hearth-stone is quenched the nation's vigour dies. The strength of a state lies in the manhood of its citizens, and manhood rests on the sanctity of the home.

But if, even in early times, and especially among the Hebrews, and in some degree also among the Greeks and Romans, the family was an important factor in national development, it has been infinitely more so since the advent of Christianity. Christ has purified all our natural relationships, and both by example and precept has sanctified family life, so that among Christian nations to-day there is no word fraught with such blessed associations as the word "home." If some ancient Utopias and

certain of the earlier and cruder of modern socialists show a tendency to regard the family as the foe of the wider brotherhood of man, the latest and most enlightened workers for a nobler order of society have returned to a saner and wiser view. Modern sociology is at one with Christianity in recognizing in the family the best preparation for the service of the state, and the most important condition of the future progress of the race. Next to the teaching of the Founder of Christianity it is to the precepts of St. Paul that this true appreciation of family life is due. The apostle does not indeed dwell at great length upon the subject. But he lays down, in the two passages in which he refers to it, the obligations resting upon its various members with so much wisdom and clearness, and withal with so much tenderness and sympathy, that his words stand for all time as a picture of the ideal home, and his counsel to the several inmates of the household may be elaborated and expanded, but cannot well be improved upon.

The family relationship is the natural sequence of marriage, which, as the apostle indicates, is the divinely ordained life-union of a man and woman. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall become one flesh."¹ We have already referred, in another connection, to Paul's views upon marriage.² It will not be necessary, therefore, to enlarge upon the subject here. It may be said Paul does not glorify marriage, but, on the other hand, he does not depreciate it. He speaks of it as he finds it, and among the mixed heathen population of a Greek city marriage was a loveless, if not a sordid relationship. In writing to the Corinthians it must be remembered that Paul was not discussing the question

¹ Eph. v. 31.

² See chap. ix. p. 241 ff.

in all its bearings, but was dealing only with certain questions which had apparently been addressed to him. There had sprung up in the Church at Corinth certain difficulties regarding marriage. One party, in accordance with the Jewish notion considered marriage to be a bounden duty, to neglect which was a sin. Another party, composed of the Greek element, exhibited a strong tendency to ascetic views on the subject, and there were those who believed that the unmarried state was superior. Two questions, therefore, were referred to Paul: first, whether it was right to marry at all, and, second, whether those who were already married, especially when one of the partners was an unbeliever, ought to continue to live together. With regard to the first question Paul distinctly says, marriage is not on the one hand compulsory, nor on the other is it a sin. It is always permissible, and, indeed, under certain conditions it is advisable. If a man's nature is such that he cannot live honourably and happily in the single state, then let him marry. But if, on the other hand, a man has strength of will and can control his physical desires he does well to remain as he is. "I say, therefore, to the unmarried and widows it is good for them to abide even as I." "So far from believing that every man ought to marry, or that married people have the advantage over the unmarried, I think the opposite, and would that all men were even as I myself am." He adduces two reasons for this view of the matter. The first is that the unmarried are freer from worldly distraction and are more likely to be available for the work of Christ. "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belongeth to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife." The second reason is that, in view of

the near approach of the end of the world and the distress which must inevitably come, it is better not to contract fresh connections.

With regard to the second question, as to whether those who had become Christians should abandon their old relations and separate themselves from unbelieving partners, Paul lays down the decisive principle, that the Christian is not to seek divorce merely on account of a difference of faith. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." It may be that the believer, through his very union, may be able to win his partner to his own faith.

Paul's view generally seems to be the practical common-sense one that marriage is good for some and celibacy for others. He is far from favouring the ascetic tendencies which were beginning already to appear in his day. He has no idea that marriage was a morally inferior state, and in his letter to Timothy he denounces as a suggestion of the devil the teaching that prevailed among the Essenes and early Gnostic sects that marriage and the procreation of children were unworthy of those who desired to pursue a holy life.¹ It has been sometimes alleged that Paul, being unmarried himself, takes a biassed view of the subject, but the whole point of the passage in Corinthians is that he positively declines to judge others by himself. He expressly says, what is good for one man may not be good for another. God has not made us all alike. Each must judge what is best for him. "Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, another after that."

The discussion of the subject in Corinthians must be taken in connection with his utterances in Ephesians, where he offers a worthier and more exalted view of the

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 1-3.

wedded life. Here he is dealing with marriage as a divine mystery in its ideal form, and not with it merely as a matter of expediency. He regards it as a sacred relationship of mutual respect and affection, and sees in it the most perfect symbol of the union between Christ and His Church.¹ In the light of this passage we are precluded from assuming that the apostle regarded marriage merely as an institution for the avoidance of sin; nor can we conclude that he held that the single life was a holier state than the wedded life.² If it was his idea that he himself could serve Christ better single, and that on the whole the unmarried were in a more favourable position to devote themselves to the affairs of God, we must remember that in writing to Timothy he takes for granted that a bishop will be a married man, the father of a family, the head of a household;³ and, assuming this as the natural order, he offers counsel to bishops, deacons, and their wives, as to their deportment. In his *Life of St. Paul*, Renan goes out of his way to express his distaste for what he calls the apostle's ostentatious indifference to women and his disparagement of marriage; at the same time he hints that Paul himself was possibly married to Lydia of Philippi, on the strength of the expression, "our true yoke fellow."⁴ A more gratuitous assumption, insinuating duplicity, if not immorality on the part of the apostle, has rarely been made by a respectable scholar. If the brilliant French critic's

¹ Eph. v. 22-33.

² Cp. Reinhard, *System der Christl. Moral.* iii. p. 330; Schmid, *Christl. Sittenlehre*, p. 780 ff.; Wuttke, *Handbuch der Christl. Sittenlehre*, ii. 461.

³ 1 Tim. iii. 2-5.

⁴ *Saint Paul*, chap. iv. p. 76. Lydia's name is not mentioned in Phil. iv. 2, and even although the word *Σύζυγε* does refer to her, it does not necessarily mean "wife."

conclusions with regard to other Biblical matters rest on no better foundation, they may be appraised at their true worth. More than once Paul distinctly leads us to infer that he was unmarried. In a well-known passage, he claims the right which the other apostles exercised of taking a wife or sister with him on his missionary journeys.¹ But this privilege, as well as the right of support, he would not use, "lest," as he said, "we should hinder the gospel of Christ." So far from speaking slightly of woman, the tender and touching salutations at the close of several of his epistles, in which many women are affectionately named, refute such a suggestion.

We have only to compare the place which women held in the Pagan world with the position she obtained in the Christian Church of Paul's day to realize the mighty revolution effected by the teaching of the apostles, and by none more than that of Paul. "No longer was woman man's toy or slave—a mere luxury or appendage to his establishment"—she had a soul, a responsibility equal to man's, and therefore a life to work out for herself. Each man and each woman must stand alone before God, and, himself and herself, give account of the life received from God. The common salvation was accessible to all alike, and was offered to all on equal terms, and partaking of which all become brethren, one with Christ and one with each other. There was neither Greek nor Barbarian, male nor female, bond nor free. All stood on a level of privilege and duty. "It is impossible for us now to realize the astonishment with which these ideas, subversive of all previous notions which obtained in heathen society, must have been received."² And it is not wonderful that in Corinth, as elsewhere, women who had

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 5.

² Dods, *Expositor's Bible*, 1 Epistle to Corinthians, p. 246.

been awakened to their own personal responsibility and equal right to the highest privileges of men should be in danger of misusing their new-found liberty, and forgetting wherein lay the secret of their power. To this subject Paul refers in that much-disputed chapter in Corinthians¹ where he speaks of the practice which had come into vogue of Christian women laying aside the veil—the symbol in eastern countries of female delicacy and reserve—and coming boldly forward in the public assembly. The movement is unbecoming and indelicate Paul in effect says. Nature itself has taught that there is a difference between men and women. Her physical constitution, her slighter and more graceful form, her quicker intuitions and warmer sympathies, all indicate that woman has her distinct place and work in the world, just as man has his, and she will exert her truest influence for good not by usurping man's place, but by filling her own and using the gifts which are peculiarly hers. In one sense indeed woman *is* equal with man. In relation to Christ there is no distinction. Unitedly the husband and wife are parts of one another. "Neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord." Both represent Christ, but in their own way. The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man. She is God's glory by being man's glory. She serves God by serving man, and helping him to realize his true self; and she never fulfils her destiny so faithfully as when she employs her womanly gifts according to the sphere and position allotted to her for the enrichment and elevation of manhood. Let her not, therefore, be anxious to remove the veil. It is the symbol, not of her degradation, but of her honour. It is the badge, not of weakness, but of power. It betokens

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 1-16.

that delicacy and sympathy of nature, that modesty and grace of spirit, in virtue of which she is fitted for the gentler ministries of life rather than the rougher work of the world. In her own sphere she reigns supreme. She rules by that which is peculiarly her own—by the power of sacrifice and love. Her part is not inferior to that of man. It is different, and when she is faithful to her own nature and gifts she will not only obtain from man that reverence and esteem which are her due, but will exercise those gracious influences upon life which the world could ill afford to lose.

It is the same jealous regard for woman's honour that inspires the apostle's counsels with respect to female attire and adornment contained in his first epistle to Timothy. "Let women adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly raiment."¹ Every thing that might avert attention from the worship of God was to be avoided. Here the apostle puts his finger upon an evil which was apparently growing with the spread of the faith. The simplicity of the early Church was passing away, and the spirit of the world was creeping in. Clement of Alexandria abounds in protests against the extravagance in dress common in his day; and Chrysostom, commenting on this very passage, inveighs against the luxury and display manifested in the congregations of his time. "What!" he exclaims, "do you approach God to pray with broidered hair and ornaments of gold? Are you come to a ball? to a marriage-feast? to a carnival? There such costly things might have been seasonable; here not one of them is wanted. You are come to pray, to ask pardon for your sins. Away with such hypocrisy! This is the attire of

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 8-12.

those who act upon the stage. Nothing of this kind becomes a modest woman, who should be adorned with sobriety.”¹ “You are Christian women,” says Paul, “and the profession you have adopted is reverence towards God” (θεοσεβειαν). This profession you have made known to the world. It is necessary, therefore, that those externals of which the world takes cognisance should not give the lie to your profession. Reverence God by coming before Him clothed both in body and soul in fitting attire. Let your bodies be freed from vulgar display. Let your souls be adorned with good works.

In two passages—the one in Ephesians and the other in Colossians—Paul deals more particularly with the reciprocal obligations of the members of the family. We do not know what special circumstances may have led him to dwell upon the domestic duties in these almost contemporaneous epistles. The section in Ephesians is somewhat fuller than the corresponding passage in Colossians, and was probably written before it. The verbal coincidences and variations in the two epistles are instructive. The precepts given are simple and natural, showing that domestic happiness is made up of very homely elements²—Love, obedience, respect: these are the conditions which constitute the ideal home. Paul recognizes three ordinary relationships as making up the family—Husband and wife, Parents and children, servant and master.

1. *Husband and wife.* The duty of the wife is subjection, and it is enforced on the ground that it is “fitting in the Lord.” That Paul does not mean by this abject subordination, such as was exacted among the Greeks and Romans, we may gather, if we turn to the fuller section on the subject in Ephesians. There, as

¹ Quoted by Plummer in *Pastoral Epistles, Expositor's Bible*, p. 101.

² Maclaren, *Colossians, Expositor's Bible*, p. 336.

we have already seen, marriage is regarded from a high and holy point of view as being an earthly shadow of the union between Christ and the Church. To Paul all human relationships were formed after the pattern of things in heaven, and that holy and mysterious union of man and woman is fashioned in the likeness of the most close and perfect union revealed to us. In the subjection of the Church to Christ, love is the soul and animating principle of it; and in a true marriage, love glorifies obedience, every suggestion of compulsion is obliterated, and reverence and joy take the place of subservience.

It is the duty of the husband to love his wife, "even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it." The example of Christ, which lifts the whole relationship above mere caprice or passion, is to rule, and the spirit of self-sacrificing love will efface all notions of command or insistence upon rights, "husbands and wives submitting themselves one to another in the fear of God."

Marriage between Christians is regarded by Paul, as Christ himself pronounced it, as indissoluble. "Unto the married, I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from the husband. But if she depart let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife." Even Christians who have Jewish or heathen partners must not seek to be separated from them. Let them rather carefully guard their union, for, as both are one, the one is sanctified by the other.¹

The exception in the case of adultery made by our Lord² is not mentioned by the apostle, either because it was self-evident or because he had no occasion to refer to it. The only exception which Paul does make is that in which the unbeliever of himself or herself departs.

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 10-16.

² Matt. v. 32.

Then nothing can be done. "A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases."¹ Whether a husband or wife, thus deserted, was free to marry again, Paul does not say. He does not forbid the contracting of a second marriage after the loss of a first partner.² On the contrary, he distinctly says that in certain circumstances it is to be recommended.³ On the whole, however, as Rothe says, the apostle does not look with favour upon second marriages, but seems to regard self-denial in the matter of a new union as a higher state.⁴ In the case of an Episcopus or presbyter (the two words refer to the same office) Paul certainly declares that the candidate for such an office must be the husband of one wife (*μίας γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ*). Without entering upon the discussion of the disputed question as to the precise meaning of this phrase, or examining the various interpretations that have been proposed, it seems to us that the balance of probability is in favour of the view that the expression is meant to declare ineligible such as have contracted a second marriage after the first marriage has been dissolved by death. This interpretation is reasonable in itself, is in harmony with the context and in consonance with what Paul says elsewhere about marriage. But while this was evidently the opinion of Paul, there is nothing to show that he was laying down a rule which was to bind the Church for all time; and the Protestant Churches generally have considered themselves justified in disregarding a direction which may have been given by reason of what the apostle calls the "present distress."⁵

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 15. ² Rom. vii. 2-3. ³ 1 Cor. vii. 9; 1 Tim. v. 14.

⁴ 1 Tim. iii. 2, 12; v. 9; Titus i. 6. See Rothe, *Theol. Ethik.* iii. p. 639.

⁵ Those who are interested in a fuller discussion of this question are referred to Döllinger's *Hyppolitus and Callistus*, Eng. trans. pp. 129-147, and to Plummer's *Pastoral Epistles*, *Expositor's Bible*, pp. 118-129.

2. *Parents and children.* In the offspring of marriage the unity of the family, which in husband and wife is a unity of inner sentiment, obtains outward expression. The new object of the parents' affection is the embodiment of their own mutual love. In the child their reciprocal love is realized and spiritualized. The very diversity of the family enriches and deepens its unity.¹ In the family two generations meet, and love, which is the bond of union, finds its expression in the authority and impartation of the elder and in the obedience and receptivity of the younger. Children are the gift of God. In one sense they belong to the parents, but in a higher sense they are a trust from heaven committed to them for the education of their immortal souls. The family foreshadows the kingdom of God, and its educative purpose belongs to its very nature. It is not an end in itself, but a means to a higher end—the discipline and perfecting of the spiritual life. It is therefore frequently employed in Scripture as a type of the Church—the germ of that kingdom which will be consummated when the perfected community of the redeemed has been finally realized.²

The apostle Paul, though a childless man himself, was a sympathetic student of human nature, and he recognized the deep spiritual value for both parents and children of their natural association. In strong language he denounces those who neglect their home duties or regard their households as only of secondary importance. Such, he says, have denied the faith, and are worse than infidels.³ It is true that the apostle has few references

¹ See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, where some suggestive thoughts occur as to ethical value of the family.

² See W. S. Bruce, *Social Aspects of Christian Morality*, p. 100.

³ 1 Tim. v. 8.

to children.¹ We miss in the account of his life and in his epistles those touches of tenderness and affection which are a noteworthy feature in our Lord's ministry. Beyond the injunctions in Ephesians and Colossians Paul has little to say of child-life, and his allusions are chiefly by way of illustration. Thus, the simple foods peculiar to the period of infancy find their analogy in the elementary truths—"food for babes"—which are the fit, though temporary, nourishment of beginners in the faith. Also childhood as a stage of human development receives sympathetic treatment: "When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things."² In one striking and long-sustained figure the entire history of the Hebrew race prior to Christianity is regarded as the age of childhood. The Jew was after all, he says, only a child, and "the law" the attendant slave to lead him to the school of Christ. Referring to the spiritual value of an early religious environment, he reminds Timothy of his godly home and early privileges, recalling how from a child he had known the Scriptures,³ since he had been trained under the pious influences of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.⁴ Yet in all his letters to congregations and individuals, in all the records of his travels in various lands, of his intercourse with friends, and of his visits to the homes of believers, there is not the faintest allusion to the children, or any particular recognition, beyond the precepts we have mentioned, of the young life which must have been growing up in Christian communities. There is one thought which we owe to Paul, says a recent writer, and it is an

¹ Cp. Glover, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, p. 122.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

³ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

⁴ 2 Tim. i. 5.

important one: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, all things are made new." "We have to recover what we lost when we outgrew the child. We must regain the simplicity and frankness of children, their instinctive way of believing all things and hoping all things. Probably the child's habit of taking nothing for granted—except the love that is all about it—is what Jesus missed most in grown men," and to which He refers when He speaks of the necessity of being born again. Is it too much to say that Paul had that saying of his Master's in his mind where he too affirms that all things are new to the child? "Every idealist and every poet is a child from the beginning to the end—and something of this sort is the mark of the school of Jesus."¹

The single injunction to children, though brief, is decisive: "Children obey your parents." It is also universal—"in all things." The apostle makes no exception, though here, of course, the higher law of Christ must rule. The one consideration which he adduces is, "for this is well-pleasing *in* the Lord," as the Revised Version in Colossians correctly puts it. The parallel passage in Ephesians substitutes "for this is right" appealing to the natural conscience. The apostle recognizes that it is not needful, nor is it wise to give reasons to children. "It is right," that is enough. If we give reasons we leave it open to children whether to act upon them or not. In this way everything is left to their pleasure. When no care is taken to cherish in children the feeling of subordination they are apt to become forward and self-opinionative.² Obedience must not, however, be the result of slavish fear, but of respect and reverence. The apostle quotes the fifth commandment as indicating the child's proper attitude, "Honour thy

¹ Glover, p. 122.

² Hegel, *Phil. of Right*, p. 177.

father and thy mother." The law for parents is addressed to fathers, partly because a mother's gentle sway has less need of the warning, "Provoke not your children," and partly because the father in Roman law which prevailed in Paul's time was the head of the household¹ and exercised absolute authority. The Roman "Patria Potestas," a fearful instrument in the hands of a despotic and masterful parent, may be said to have wounded the ethical life of Roman society at its very heart. The apostolic precept uttered in the family circle with a voice that bore the authority of heaven in its tones must have done not a little to save the heathen home from dissolution, to reknit its bonds of relationship, and to purify and vitalize its love. The injunction has a negative and a positive side. Negatively, "Provoke not your children to wrath," forbidding all unreasonable commands, capricious restrictions, all irritable and unjust treatment, which naturally produce in the young mind a sense of injury and consequent rebellion. The parent's command must be based upon justice and guided by affection. Its object ought to be, not to rouse resentment, but to create trustful and gladsome obedience. Positively, fathers are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. *παιδεία* has a somewhat stern signification, and refers to the discipline which comes through correction; while *νουθεσία* suggests advice, reproof, exhortation, and all the intellectual and moral influences whereby a young soul may be trained for life. The basis and end of all culture is "in the Lord." Children, in Paul's view, were to be educated for Christ. Physical training and mental instruction were valuable only as a means of spiritual nurture. For Paul to bring children up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord meant nothing

¹ Children of Roman fathers were slaves under Roman law.

less than to teach them to comprehend the meaning and bearing of the great spiritual truths which the Gospel had brought into the world. We have but to contrast Christian and heathen beliefs and aims, the hope of the one and the despair of the other, to realize all Paul must have meant when he enjoined Christian parents to nurture their children in the Lord. To-day such religious training is a commonplace, and, though often neglected, it involves no great sacrifice either on the part of parents or children. But in the days of Paul it must have meant for many of those young lives a preparation for martyrdom, for the life-long endurance of the keenest agony which cruelty could inflict rather than deny the Christ who had died for them.

3. *Masters and servants.* In considering Paul's treatment of this relationship it must, of course, be remembered that in his time servants were slaves, not persons who had voluntarily given their work for wages. As we have already remarked, Christianity did not at once break the chains of bondage or fell the Upas tree of slavery. But by quickening the general conscience and inspiring both masters and slaves with the Christian spirit it gradually created a sentiment which mitigated its horrors and ultimately abolished it. This is beautifully shown in Paul's letter to Philemon, whose slave, Onesimus, was sent back to him by the apostle, "no longer a slave but a brother beloved." Paul laid down the great principle that in Christ there is neither bond nor free, and without making any direct attack upon this or any other recognized social institution allowed the truth to do its own work. The apostle must have been keenly sensible of the evils of slavery. It has been estimated that in the Roman world of Paul's day the proportion of slaves to freemen was as two to one. They often worked and

sometimes slept in chains. If a master was murdered by a slave, all the slaves of the household were put to death.¹ It would be an endless task to recite the horrors to which slaves were subject through the cruelty and lust of their wealthy Roman masters. The bloody sports of the gladiatorial shows and the indecent products of the Roman stage were partly the effects and partly the cause of the worst features of Roman slavery. Roman nobles and Roman ladies were brutalized by witnessing these exhibitions, and too often went home to give vent among the slaves of their own household to the passions which had been aroused.² That Paul never in so many words expresses any authoritative condemnation of this system, though the more remarkable when we remember his ardent and sympathetic temperament, discloses at once his far-seeing sagacity and his calm confidence in the sufficiency of the Gospel. He was a Christian apostle, not a political agitator. He believed in the ultimate power of the Evangel to redeem the world from every evil. His work was to bring men under the constraint of love to Christ; not here and there to denounce particular abuses, but to infuse into men's hearts that which in time would remove all abuses, because it dealt with their common cause, the unfilial and unbrotherly spirit. As a wise physician he directs his attention, not to symptoms, but to the disease itself. As a far-seeing Christian statesman he is content to work and wait. It may be that in all this he was rather led by a deep-seated instinct than by conscious policy. In these matters there is a "power behind" which shapes the whisper of the throne. And it is not in a day that the

¹ As in case of Pedanius Secundus in 61 A.D., when Paul was probably in Rome, see Tacitus, *Annals*, xiv. 42-45, and elsewhere.

² See Plummer, *Pastoral Epistles*.

Christian understanding is quickened to the intellectual perception of the real root of evil in established institutions. In any case we can see now that Paul was rightly guided in neither preaching discontent to the slave nor, in the first place, emancipation to the master, but in seeking to win the better self in both, and thus gain a real place in the world's life for that which had the promise and potency of redemption for all men and institutions alike. The evils which clustered around slavery—idleness, deceit, cruelty, lust—he denounced unsparingly, but because they were vices in themselves, not because of their connection with any social institution.

The passages in Paul's letters which bear directly upon the relation of masters and slaves are, of course, addressed to Christians, and their scope and character are determined by that fact. The counsel is seldom such as would be welcomed by the natural man. Writing to servants, his first word is: "Be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh." It is a stern command, which perhaps may have struck a chill into many a slave who had embraced the Gospel in the hope that he might escape from an intolerable position.¹ But Paul goes on to insist, it might seem to the slave still more sternly, on the inward completeness of the obedience, "not with eye service, as men-pleasers." Here with keen insight the apostle lays his finger on the natural temptations of the life of slavery—the scamping of work, the outward display of diligence, the tendency to superficiality and pretence, the want of fidelity and thoroughness in work not immediately under the eye of the master—vices not unknown even in our own day in the world of toil and trade.

Over against this negative injunction the apostle

¹ See Maclaren, *Colossians*, p. 345.

places a positive, "but in singleness of heart"—that is, with individual motive—"and fearing God," which is opposed to fearing men, "with goodwill doing service to the Lord and not to man." Or, as it is in Colossians: "Whatever ye do, do it from the heart"—a precept which covers the whole activity of man, and lifts all work up from the compulsory obedience to an earthly master into the sacred region of religious duty. For after all, says Paul, your true master is not man, but Christ; and all you do, irksome and hard though it sometimes may seem to be, is work for Christ, and in serving your earthly master you are really serving Him, whom to serve is freedom and blessing and ensured reward.

In writing to Timothy, somewhat later, Paul takes even higher ground. He still enjoins obedience and willing service, but adds that slaves who are Christians are to count their masters worthy of all honour that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed,¹ and that even in the cases in which the masters may be heathen. But when their masters are believers, they are to regard them as brethren, not despising them because they are their masters, but serving them, because they are sharers of equal spiritual blessings. There was a danger, Paul foresaw, that when a slave became a Christian, and was treated by a Christian master with brotherliness, the rebound from grovelling fear to terms of equality and affection would prove too much for him, and contempt might take the place of respectful loyalty.

But Paul does not confine the obligation of slaves to the negative attitude of obedience to their masters and fidelity in their work. In somewhat remarkable words he commits to them a high and splendid task. It may be theirs in a very special way to commend the Christian

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

faith, and that without relaxing their obedience or seeking emancipation from their present condition. Even as they are and where they are, they may actually "adorn the doctrine of God their saviour in all things."¹ The fact that Christianity was a religion which had been embraced by the most degraded elements of society—slaves and their associates—had prejudiced it in the eyes of the cultured and high-born.² "But," says Paul, "your very weakness may be your strength, and you may turn your very disadvantage into an advantage, letting the power of the Gospel be manifest through the very humbleness of your position." It may not be much that you can actively accomplish for your faith; but you can convince the world that there must be some mighty energy in a religion which can make out of such unpromising material upright, honest, pure, and gentle men and women. Nay, that which may seem in the eyes of the world base and despicable it is within your power to render fair and attractive. What finer testimony could be given to the beauty of the Gospel; and just such a testimony it lay within their ability to afford. Through the influence of Christian slaves, in the family, in the workshop, in the army, and even within the precincts of Caesar's household, by the beauty of their lives and the witness of their lips, not a few among the nobler classes in the early days of Christianity were won to Christ.³ The care and education of children were frequently left in Roman households to slaves; and if in some cases evil resulted, in others blessing ensued. Nor were these the only ways in which slaves were enabled to adorn the doctrine of God. Not a few bondsmen and bondswomen in the first

¹ Titus ii. 9, 10.

² Cp. the well-known taunt of Celsus.

³ See Origen, *Migne Series Graeca*, xi. 476-483, quoted by Plummer, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 256.

age won the martyr's crown; thus by their deaths, even more than by their lives, giving lustre to the teaching of their Saviour, sealing their faith with sacrifice and making it a thing of fadeless beauty.¹

It but remains to add that the apostle does not confine his precepts to slaves. To masters as well he gives brief but pregnant counsel. Not only are they to forbear threatening,² but they are to give to their servants that which is just and equal,³ a piece of advice which must have sounded strange in the ears of those who were wont to look upon their slaves, not as persons at all, but simply as their goods and chattels, without any rights whatever, to be treated according to their pleasure. How far-reaching is this counsel! It touches the whole modern relationship of masters and employés to-day. If in theory at least this principle is beginning to be acknowledged, we owe it to those bold words of the apostle; and if much yet remains to be done to heal the misunderstandings which so often arise between employers and workmen, it is because as Christians we have not grasped the full significance of that Pauline precept: "Give that which is just and equal." Paul pleads for justice, not for charity; for equality of rights and opportunities as between man and man; and on that basis alone must the fabric of our social and industrial life be reared. This duty of masters is enforced by the same consideration as was applied to urge servants to fulfil their obligations, "Ye also have a master in heaven." Thus for all, in every sphere of life, for masters and servants alike, Christ is set forth by the apostle as at once the pattern and plea of service. Paul does not specify what is right and equitable—it is no thing of

¹ *E.g.* Blandina and her mistress in 177 A. D.

² Eph. vi. 9.

³ Col. iv. 1.

rote, but will vary with varying circumstances; he leaves that and all details of conduct to consciences that have been purified and enlightened by the Spirit of Him who, though He was Lord of all, was among men as one that serveth.

CHAPTER XII

DUTIES IN RELATION TO THE STATE

THE family may be regarded as a stage in the evolution of Society, although of course it is never superseded, but remains a staple element of social life. One has aptly named it "the structural cell of the social organism." It is the foundation of all moral relationships, and an important part of its function is to educate its members for their wider duties as citizens of the commonwealth.

As to the origin of the state, there has been much variety of opinion. Some have held the view that it was originally an artificial relationship into which men voluntarily entered, in order, on the one hand, to limit their selfish instincts, and, on the other, to promote their mutual advantage. This theory of "Social Contract," as it has been called, which was first proclaimed by Rousseau and afterwards maintained by Hobbes and others, has been discarded in modern times as a fiction of the imagination. The social unit is rather the family than the individual. It is not of his own choice that the individual becomes a member of society. He is born into it. His duties arise from it. In his relations with it his life gains moral content. Only in its service can he find happiness, and realize his being's end and aim.

Since the time of Darwin, under the influence of the evolutionary theory of the origin of species and the biological studies based upon it, it has become the vogue to regard the state after the analogy of the living organism. In the advance from lower to higher forms of physical life, the simple homogeneous unity passes into a complex being, with a variety of functions and interaction of parts. In the passages from the lower to the higher orders of social life there appears a corresponding diversity of relationship and service. Society in its earlier stages, like the primitive protoplasm, is virtually structureless. There is practically no variety of parts and no division of labour. Every individual is engaged in the same work. Each is his own provider of food, clothing, and shelter. But gradually specialization begins. There arises an interchange of gifts, a reciprocity of service. One man cultivates the soil and produces food; another weaves and provides clothing; a third hews the timber and builds dwellings. Man ceases to be a whole in himself. He is only complete in his fellows, and as he serves others he serves himself.¹

But while this theory accounts for the division of labour and the interdependence of the parts, it does not make allowance for the idea of personality and self-conscious determination which pervades the higher forms of society, and is the true ethical bond of unity in the state. Men are not merely automata, functions of an organism. They are free living personalities united by a sense of human obligation and kindredship. The state is more than a physical organism. The bonds by which its members are knit together are not simply composed of flesh and blood. It is a community of moral aims and ideals. It is dominated by a spiritual purpose. It is

¹ W. S. Bruce, *Social Aspects of Christian Morality*, p. 123.

governed by ethical principles. It stands for a great moral idea to the fulfilment of which all its citizens must contribute.¹ What Prof. Gidding calls "the social mind" lies at the basis of the true state. We must not, however, attach any mysterious or mystic meaning to this phrase. "There is no reason to suppose," says this writer, "that society is a great being which is conscious of itself through some mysterious process of thinking separate and distinct from the thinking that goes on in the brains of individual men. . . . It means that individual minds act simultaneously in like ways and continually influence one another, and that certain mental products result from such combined mental action."² This conception, on the one hand, guards personality from absorption in the community, and, on the other, avoids the fallacy that the state is nothing but an aggregate of units bound together by physical necessity and for material benefit alone. It saves us alike from the individualistic view of Rousseau and Hobbes, and the communistic idea of Plato's republic. It declares the great ethical truth that the good of the state and the good of the individual are not different, but one; that no man realizes his highest self unless he devotes his gifts to the common good; and that the state misses its truest purpose if it fails to afford its citizens the opportunity of complete self-realization.

How does the teaching of Paul stand related to this modern view of the state? It would be indeed strange if it had no relation, if the ideas of sociology, which are professedly the outcome and development of Christianity, found no support in the ethics of the earliest as well as the foremost exponent of the mind of Christ. When we

¹ Bruce, *Ibid.*, p. 127.

² Gidding, *Elements of Sociology*, pp. 119-120, quoted by Bruce.

approach the study of the Pauline literature from this point of view, the first feeling is apt to be one of disappointment. The student of political science will search the epistles in vain for any full and elaborate discussions of the manifold problems and practical difficulties which confront the social reformers of our times. But no one can read these letters without at least forming the impression that the state had for Paul a very high and sacred significance, that government as such was viewed by him as a divine institution, and that what we call civic duty was in his eyes a thing not merely of legal but of moral obligation.

It cannot, indeed, be a matter of surprise in view of the humble status of most of his converts, and the attitude of suspicion, or even of hostility, assumed by the civil authorities to the Christian communities, that Paul should adopt a more or less negative position towards the political fabric which he found in the world of his day. No explicit statement with regard to the duty of the citizen to contribute his practical service to the commonwealth according to his ability and opportunity can be found in the writings of the apostle. Beyond enjoining the necessity of work as a means of livelihood, and recommending that each should remain in the sphere in which he has been placed and should perform diligently and conscientiously the duties of his calling, we find little direct reference to the matter of citizenship. This is partly to be explained by the actual character of the existing political system. The Roman government seemed to exist solely for earthly and material ends, and to deny the very possibility of any other. It gave true expression to its aims when it finally established Caesar-worship as the official religion, declaring thereby the absolute supremacy of human

power.¹ To the secularism of the age Paul's ethical ideals were entirely opposed. For him worldly affairs were as nothing compared with spiritual ends. "The things which are seen are temporal." They have little value in themselves. A little more earthly comfort, a little higher social position, the enriching of life with those advantages and luxuries which we now regard as evidences of advancing civilization, had comparatively slight interest for the apostle, and he would never have thought it worth while to bid men work for the realization of such merely creaturely comforts and earthly ends as the Roman power in his day stood for. But in so far as these things are not ends in themselves, but means of the inner liberation and enlargement of the spiritual life, vehicles for the advancement of man's higher purposes, we may confidently affirm that they would have had the apostle's support. We have already seen that he neither takes the ascetic view of life nor desires to withdraw men from human interests. "However much a Christian may dwell in an ideal world, yet it is ordained by nature herself that he must touch the earth."² Paul with all his idealism was a man of too much practical insight not to appreciate that truth. May it not be said, indeed, that it was just his appreciation of it which lay at the basis of his express recommendations that none should be a burden upon others; that each minding his own affairs should at the same time have regard to the interests of his fellows; that while every man must bear his own burden and honourably fill his own sphere, it is incumbent upon him in fulfilment of the great Christian law to ease if he may the load that rests on his neighbour; that each, striving to live at peace with all men, should

¹ See E. Scott, *The Apologetic of the New Test.* p. 141.

² Stalker, *The Ethic of Jesus*, p. 351.

engage also in active ministries of helpfulness. In a society in which each individual faithfully fulfils his own duties and conscientiously bears his own burdens, he is already helping others to fulfil their duties and to bear their burdens. Paul's insistence upon the personal fidelity of every man in his station goes far. "The citizen has but to stand in his station and perform its duties in order to fulfil the demands of citizenship. He is like an organ to the organism, best where he is—at his own work. Doing that none would deserve better of the state, for there is a valid sense, none more ultimate, in which 'all service ranks the same.' The man who stands firm within his duty stands not merely for himself but for his family, and not merely for his family but for his neighbour, and not merely for his neighbour but for his state. . . . He serves the universal order, and the universal order stands behind him to protect and sustain him in his rights."¹

But while these implications might, we think, be legitimately drawn from the more general teaching of Paul, there is not wanting, it seems to us, a more positive and particular reference to the reciprocal obligations belonging to members of the community. It is true, indeed, that the splendid conception of the interdependence of the various parts of the bodily organism is primarily employed by Paul as an illustration of the community of believers, as an analogy of the spiritual body of Christ.² But the services which the whole renders to the parts and the parts to the whole in Paul's elaborate exposition are not confined to purely spiritual matters. They embrace also the manifold activities of a man in relation to his fellows, and in relation to the

¹ Prof. Jones, *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, p. 123.

² 1 Cor. xii.

whole community of which he is a part. We cannot but believe that Paul had a wider life in view when he so admirably works out the idea of solidarity and differentiation, showing that hand and foot, eye and ear, have their use and function only as they serve the larger life of which they are the constituents. No man liveth to himself alone. The hand cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee, nor the foot to the hand, I have no need of thee. Each belongs to all and all belong to each. Every individual member draws strength and nourishment from the body, and contributes in its turn supply and support to the body. I acquire from others the means of satisfaction, and at the same time I am bound to produce for others the means of satisfaction. Nor is this an obligation placed upon me from without. It belongs to me in virtue of my inmost nature, and it belongs to the very order of human society. There is no community without individuals, nor in the deepest and truest sense is there any individual without the community. Everything individual becomes in this way social, and everything social becomes again individual.¹ This is true of the Christian community. It is equally true of society in general. The ethical teachers of to-day who claim Paul's authority in their advocacy of civic duty can hardly be accused of unduly straining the Pauline figure when they adapt it to the circumstances of our present political and social life, and such an interpretation of the analogy is all the more defensible since the moral structure of society as it exists to-day among Christian peoples has been built up of these qualities of justice, sympathy, and service, which, as we have seen, are among the most important elements of Pauline ethics.

¹ See Hegel's *Philosophie des Rechtes*, p. 195, where the idea is finely worked out in connection with the civic life.

Paul's direct references to the state and the relation of the Christian to it, if few, are emphatic. He does not, indeed, enter upon the details of the state's functions, nor attempt to enumerate the duties of its citizens. He neither essays a philosophy of state-craft nor discusses the merits and defects of the government of his day. He simply lays down in a few memorable sentences principles of far-reaching application, which contain in germ the essence of the ruler's authority and the spirit of the subject's obedience. "Let every soul," he writes to the Roman Church, "be subject to the higher powers."¹ *πᾶσα ψυχή* is emphatic, as if he would say that the obligation to loyalty was not less binding upon Christians than others. It has been supposed by some that he was induced to write in these terms because there was in the Church of Rome an Ebionite party, who held that the worldly power was an institution of the Evil One and deserved no deference. Whether or no this was the actual reason of Paul's introduction of the subject, he was evidently aware of a tendency among Christian converts to assume that, because they had attained to the liberty of Christ, they were subject to no other law than the law of grace, and to no other lord than the Lord of Heaven, and were therefore absolved from all earthly sovereignty.² In any case he promptly scatters such presumptions. There is no duality or opposition of powers. You cannot divide life into two kingdoms, a secular and a sacred. "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of Him."

"It is surprising," says Wernle, "to find in what favourable terms the apostle speaks of the state, and

¹ Rom. xiii. 1.

² See Hofmann, *Schriftbeweiss*, ii. 2, p. 442; also Ernesti, *Ethik des Ap. Paulus*, p. 125.

that, too, at a time when Nero sat on the throne." But it must be remembered, as has been pointed out by Rauschenbusch,¹ that Paul wrote his commendation of Roman justice during the early and happy years of Nero's reign, when that gifted prince was still under the influence of Seneca, and when as yet the Christian Church was immune from Roman persecution. "For Paul, the Roman citizen, Rome is the great empire of peace, which enables him to exercise his calling as a missionary without let or hindrance, and more than once protects him and his congregations from the Jews and the rabble."² For Paul the state is a divine institution. It is ordained by the deity for the reproof and punishment of wrong—"a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well." If it is to fulfil its divinely appointed functions, whether these be conceived (as they have sometimes been in history) as the merely negative duties of protecting well-doers and punishing offenders, or as the mere positive prerogatives of ministering to the highest good of its subjects, it is obvious that it must be supported by the loyalty and even by the services of its members. Paul therefore affirms that it is entitled not only to the homage but to the tribute of all; and he enjoins all men, Christians not less than heathens, to pay their taxes willingly, and to render honour to those in authority. Not to do so is to dishonour God. "Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God." Not only does Paul himself on every occasion on which he comes into contact with the civil magistrate speak and act with the greatest courtesy and deference, but he actually enjoins all Christians "to pray for kings and for all that are in authority," in order that under their

¹ *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p. 110.

² *Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 201.

protection "they may live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty." For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.¹

Of the two extreme views as to the meaning of the state, between which the verdict of history has wavered—that of Augustine who regarded the state as the result of our sinful condition, and as the direct antithesis of the kingdom of God: and that of Hegel, who saw in it the highest ethical form of society, the realization of the moral ideal—the view of Paul may be said to have approximated more nearly to the latter.² Writing to the Church at Rome, a city which might have appeared to the first Christians, and which indeed was styled by their successors the "Great Babylon," Paul does not for a moment suggest that it was merely for prudence' sake that they should give to the imperial power unquestioning obedience. He appeals to the loftiest motives. He takes the highest ground. All authority is of God in its origin and ultimate purpose. What does it matter to him whether Nero be a devil or a saint? He is the prince upon the throne. He is the symbol of divine authority. He is, he actually says, "the minister of God to thee for good."³ And it is significant that he uses in this connection the same expression, *εἰς το ἀγαθόν*, which he employs in an earlier part of this epistle to denote that highest good which is the portion of God's loved ones for whom all things are working together, *εἰς ἀγαθόν*.⁴ We give homage to those in authority, he says, not from fear, not for wrath's sake, but for conscience' sake. We pay them their dues, not from compulsion, but from love. Here as everywhere the great principle holds

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 2.

² Cp. Haering, *Ethics of the Christian Life* (Trans.), p. 406.

³ Rom. xiii. 4.

⁴ Rom. viii. 28.

good—love is the fulfilling of the law. Given faith in God, then everything naturally follows: obedience to whom obedience is due, tribute to whom tribute, honour to whom honour. Every duty falls into its rightful place, every man stands in his true relation, and the whole commonwealth of humanity, from the sovereign down to the meanest subject, is embraced in one all-compassing command—thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.¹ As a Christian Paul looks beyond the temporal world-power as actually existing. Whatever the particular form it may assume, he sees in the state and its rulers only the expression of God's will, of His creative power and holy design. Rome is His agent, imperfect, faulty, often oppressive and unjust—but still the channel through which for the moment the Almighty works for the furtherance of His purposes.

We must be careful, however, not to confuse this optimistic view of the state in general with anything like moral approval or patriotic feeling on the part of the apostle for the particular hierarchy under which he happened to live. Government was a divine institution. But the actual embodiment of that institution in the Roman state came far short of Paul's conception of the ideal. It was too evidently the visible counterpart of the false ideals of heathen worship, and stood almost solely for material ends, was indeed little more than the earthly representative of the kingdom of darkness out of which his Christian converts had been delivered. While therefore they were passively to accept its conditions and faithfully to render it obedience, they were driven to regard themselves as a community apart, an alien race whose home and fatherland was heaven. Their true king was not Caesar, but Christ, whose speedy return

¹ Rom. xiii. 1-9.

would, as Paul evidently believed, put an end to all earthly power, even to the Empire of Rome.¹

It was, however, in no spirit of tame subserviency that Paul bade Christians act towards the state. As far as it was possible they were to live at peace with all men. But they were not for a moment to forget even in their citizenship the eternal distinctions of right and wrong. They were not to call evil good or good evil. There was for the Christian a higher law than submission to outward authority. "We must obey God rather than man." And Paul would have endorsed the noble protest of Peter and John, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."² The apostle, it is true, undertook no social propaganda. He did not directly attack any of the evils of his day of which he could not but be cognizant. He made no protest against the organized grafting in the Roman system of tax-farming, nor did he make any direct attempt to abolish slavery or even to mitigate its horrors. Nor is this to be wondered at. "The most ardent socialist of our day would have stepped softly if he had been in the apostle's place. The right of public agitation was very limited in the Roman empire, and any attempt to rouse the people against the oppression of the government would not only have been relentlessly crushed, but would have sown widespread discontent and created useless revolution among a vast population."³ But Paul was not the man simply to leave things as he found them. He had his own way of rectifying abuses. He had a profound faith in the transforming power of Christian love. In his treatment of the duties of domestic life, to which we have already referred, and especially in

¹ See Wernle, vol. i. p. 202.

² Acts iv. 19.

³ Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p. 152.

his appeal to Philemon on behalf of his slave, we see by what means he sought to Christianize society. It was his aim to implant the divine life in the souls of men, believing that from regenerated individuals forces of righteousness would silently radiate, and that evil customs and corrupt institutions would gradually be dissolved like the mists upon the hills before the rising sun. Make the tree good and the fruit will follow. Insert the little leaven and the entire mass will be pervaded by it, and ultimately rendered wholesome. This was Christ's own principle, and it is the mightiest influence in leavening the world. But there are times when the Christian must employ more direct and active measures for righting wrong and achieving good. There is an ethic of revolt. There is a realm into which human law dare not intrude—the domain of conscience. When “unrighteousness masquerades in the garb of legality,” then the Christian man must take his stand and utter his protest. When the occasion required it Paul could speak out. Neither fear nor favour could silence his testimony. He was God's ambassador, even in bonds. No perils could daunt him, no threatenings turn him from his course. With all his high regard for authority he came into conflict with the imperial power. No man suffered more at the hands of Roman officials, and in all probability he fell a victim at the last because he refused to be disobedient to the heavenly vision.

It must be admitted that there are many burning questions in modern life with which Paul does not deal. The relation of Christianity to art, science, and commerce, the attitude of the Christian to the economic and industrial problems of society, the relation of capital and labour, the question of poverty, the ethics of war, the propriety of self-defence against foreign invasion, the

raising of armies and the building of fleets, the obligation of citizens to give their means and their services and even their lives for their country—these and a host of similar questions which have emerged in our complex and intricate civilization have no explicit place in Paul's ethical teaching.

With reference to the subject of art, Renan has complained in his life of Paul that the apostle was unable to see any distinction between the enthusiasm for the beautiful as it existed at Athens and gross idolatry, mistaking the exquisite art of the Grecian capital for the superstitious worship so abhorrent to his Hebrew forefathers. But after all, must not the modern traveller, as he beholds those temples reared to Zeus and Athene which crown the Acropolis, however much he may admire their grace and symmetry of form, agree with the apostle that, despite their architectural beauty, they were nothing more or less than the outward expressions of idolatrous worship? There is no more gracious handmaid of religion than art; and when consecrated to the highest ends, as she was in more than one period of Christian history, she has a noble ministry to render in revealing to the soul something of the mystery and majesty of the divine life. But a sensuous aestheticism, if it was sometimes the pride, was also the peril of Greece. Paul's protest, therefore, has a permanent value. His penetrating glance enabled him to pierce through the disguises of idolatry to the core, and unmask for all time those forms of refinement and culture which are so apt to usurp the place in men's hearts which God alone should fill. It may be that the aesthetic sense was somewhat deficient in Paul. Though he must have beheld in his travels some of the fairest as well as the sublimest scenes which Eastern Europe has to show, we do not find in his epistles any

indication of that tender appreciation of natural beauty so evident in the words of our Lord. But though that is so, and may be variously accounted for, he who bade the Philippians think upon whatsoever things are pure, and lovely, and of fair report, and who reminded the Corinthians that all things were theirs, would not have frowned upon the contributions of science and art to religion, but would have welcomed as a sacred offering every gift that helps us to interpret the mind of God.

With regard to the other aspects of modern social life to which we have referred, particularly those economic and industrial questions which press for a solution in our present complex society, it has been affirmed by a recent writer that "we involve ourselves in all manner of contradictions when we seek to interpret Paul's principles as valid for our civic life to-day."¹ It seems to us that this is only partly true. Precepts and commands are particular, limited often to special circumstances, but principles, if they are true at all, are just those elements in the writings or utterances of a great teacher which *are* valid and applicable far beyond the occasions on which they were first expressed. It is true our social circumstances and surroundings are very different from those of Paul. The state with which he had to do was the embodiment of material aims and earthly ambitions, which are now, in theory at least, discredited. The Roman power as actually embodied was for him a power of this present evil world, and while believers were enjoined to submit to its enactments, they were taught to regard themselves as a separate brotherhood, *in* the world but not *of* it. This view of the existing government naturally limited Paul's sympathies, and gave to many of his counsels a restricted application. He did

¹ E. Scott, *The Apologetic of the New Testament*, p. 143.

not regard the actual Roman Empire as capable of being spiritualized. His hope for mankind rather lay in the contemplation of its overthrow as a secular power altogether. But as we have seen Paul believed that earthly government was ordained of Heaven, and he had his own conception of an ideal state. There arose before his imagination a great heavenly city in which citizens were enrolled from every nation and tongue, a commonwealth of God, of which every man who had been received into unity with Christ was a member. For Paul and his immediate successors this seemed to be but a vision of future glory, to be realized when temporal things had passed away. But as time went on, and Christianity became more and more a permanent factor in shaping the world's history and in moulding national life, the realization of a Christian commonwealth amid the actual conditions of this earth was felt to be not impossible.¹

Though the "Holy Roman Empire" of mediaeval ecclesiasticism was a dream, it was a dream of a reality, and with the progress of the centuries the Christian state has been brought slowly but surely within the range of practical aspiration and endeavour. In our day Christianity and the state are no longer antagonistic. Public life is impregnated with ethical aims. The avowed secularism and debasing tyranny of heathen rule against which Paul contended, have been, at least in large measure, superseded by ideals of humanity and freedom which, to say the least, are not at variance with the Gospel of Christ. Men may not agree as to the true solution of the social problems that are confronting them, but they are mostly at one in the conviction that they must be determined on moral principles and in terms of the highest good. It is no argument for indifference to the questions of our

¹ See Strong, *Christian Ethics*, p. 128.

day that Paul did not actually discuss them. We too have the mind of Christ, and we are never so true to the spirit of Paul as when we apply the great principles of his Master and ours to the needs of our age.

To Paul in this regard we owe no small debt. Two great truths, taught indeed by Christ, but specially elaborated by the apostle, have inspired and shaped the conceptions of modern times with regard to social and civic duty. These are the idea of *Personality* and the consequent idea of *Human Equality*. In these two notions lie the seeds of that spirit of democracy and that sense of individual responsibility which are the features of the nobler social order of our times.

It is hardly too much to say that the new importance assigned to *personality* may be regarded as the unique gift of Christianity to modern thought.¹ According to the teaching of the New Testament an absolute value attaches to every human being. Christ, Paul declares, died for all. Not only has human nature in a unique instance been personally united to God, but the whole human race without distinction has been declared capable of participation in that union. This fact at once reveals a depth of latent possibility, not in the favoured few, but in man as man.² Man has a worth, apart altogether from birth, endowment, or circumstance, in virtue of his humanity alone. Each individual has his own capacity for happiness, his own destiny to work out, his own self to realize, his own responsibility to meet.

Connected with this idea of personality, and indeed the complement of it, is the notion of *equality*. Not only has each man an individual worth, but all have an

¹ See Strong, *Christian Ethics*, p. 129 ; also, Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, p. 14.

² Illingworth, *ibid.*

equal worth before God. It was the emphatic assertion of the equal manhood of all men that saved Christianity from the charge of narrow individualism. Had Paul dwelt only upon the private and exclusive relation of each individual to God, omitting all reference to his interest in his brother men, had he taught man to look upwards only and not outwards as well, the Christian faith would have found its appropriate home in the oratory of the monk, but not amid the cares and toils of common humanity. But the message which the apostle emphatically declared was that with God there is no respect of persons, and that all are equal in His sight. The middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile has been broken down. In Christ all differences have been annulled. Greek and Roman, bond and free, are one. Hence a new tie of fraternity was created, a new sense of mutual love and helpfulness instilled into men's hearts.

These two notes of individuality and community struck by Paul have become the dominant and distinctive factors in the making of modern society. Many minds and many influences contributed to their gradual elucidation and development in European history. Augustine, Luther, and Kant may be selected as names representative of the great creative epochs through which the conception of personality and its concomitant idea of equality have passed.¹ In his *Confessions*, and still more in his *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine gives expression to the thought of the intrinsic worth of the individual man, dwelling perhaps more upon his accountability to God than upon his relations to his brethren. While Luther re-emphasized this idea with a vehemence that shook the whole of Europe, making the independence of man and the liberty

¹ See Illingworth, pp. 161 ff.

of the individual conscience the watchword of the Reformation, Kant at a later age gave, in the realm of pure thought, a new depth and significance to the conceptions of personality and freedom, making them a fresh point of departure, not only for the theoretic study of human reason, but also for the practical enforcement of these great ideas in the life of human duty. It was the merit of the great German thinker to show that a person was a self-conscious, self-determining individual, and that as such he was "an end in himself." Every human being, simply because he is such, possesses freedom of will, the right to be himself, and ultimate object of personal endeavour and development, and however he may, and to realize himself must, voluntarily sacrifice himself for others, he may not be degraded into the passive instrument of another's power or pleasure.

These great ideas of the value of the human soul and the equal worth of every man, which have their roots in the teaching of the apostle Paul, have given an impulse to the most fruitful European thought, and have become the most potent influences in shaping modern political life.

As it is admittedly the prerogative and duty of each man to realize his highest self, to be the complete man God intended him to be, so it is the growing conviction of the best minds that it is the function of the state—that society in which men are knit together in indissoluble bonds of interdependence and service—to provide those conditions which are most favourable to real equality of opportunity. It is the task of the state, not merely, as was formerly believed, to administer retributive justice, but to create and foster those agencies and institutions which work for the amelioration of the lot and the development of the weal of its citizens, securing for each,

the humblest and most unfortunate as well as for the highest and most favoured, the full liberty and encouragement to make the best of his life. On the one hand, the state must strive to secure the richest variety of service among its citizens for the good of the commonwealth, and, on the other, it must aim at making the conditions of labour for the humblest worker such that he may find in it the opportunity of a true human life.¹

But if this is the duty of the state to the individual, it is clear that it cannot fulfil this ideal except in so far as individuals realize their civic obligations as members of the social organism. The citizen who gives most to the state gets most from the state. It is the men who play their part, the active citizens who widen and enrich their lives through interest in and work for public causes, who reap the real harvest from civic life. We speak of rights, but there can be no rights without corresponding duties. For rights are not gifts nor merely native possessions; they are simply opportunities, positions for the exercise of powers and the performance of duties.² Our freedom does not consist in the possession of rights, but in the exercise of duties. Emancipation is not liberty. Emancipation may come with a stroke, but freedom must be earned by personal service and worked out by individual effort. And only those obtain it who prove that they deserve it. Not by escape from irksome thralldom or withdrawal from social obligation, but by gladsome self-surrender and the positive participation in work for their brethren's weal shall men reap the fruits of liberty. For the state is not a separate and independent body, but

¹ Cp. Westcott, *Christian Aspects of Life*, p. 232.

² Cp. Green, *Political Obligations*, section 154 ff.; also, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, section 184. See also Maccunn, *Six Radical Thinkers*, p. 257.

exists only in and through the men and women who compose it; and the actual achievements of any particular government for moral good will depend upon the enlightened sense of moral obligation which prevails in the community at large. The state makes its will dominant through the voice of the people. As the individuals are, so the commonwealth will be. The Greek Empire perished, as has been pointed out, because the faith of the people found no exercise in the service of the state.¹ Therefore, such individual interest and action is necessary alike for the well-being of the community and of the citizen. So that here again that splendid Pauline figure of the reciprocal influence of the body and its members stands for all time as the ideal of the body politic—an organic life in which the unit finds its place of security and service in the whole, and the whole lives in and acts through the parts.

A new sense of individual obligation, a new species of national brotherhood, a new feeling of manhood, a new pride in the community of life—these are what are wanted if we are to awake to the possibilities and grandeur of our membership with one another in Christ. "We need," says an eloquent modern writer, "a more personal feeling for the state, a kindlier feeling for the responsibilities it imposes, and a more exalted sense of its spiritual meaning. We want the power to pay rates and taxes with a cheerful sense of citizenship . . . we want to see the administrative capacity and enterprise of the best citizens freely placed at the public service, . . . and with all we need a baptism of religious feeling in our corporate consciousness, a new sense that we are serving God in serving our fellows, that will hallow and hearten the crusade for health and social happiness, and give to

¹ Westcott, *ibid.* 232.

every servant of the community a sense of spiritual service.”¹

These aspirations and ideals which have already begun to take shape in the most progressive minds of to-day, have, as Christians claim, their basis in the teachings of Christ and His apostles. Paul may not have seen all that was involved in his principles. What great thinker, and especially what great thinker who has the stuff of the prophet or poet in him ever does? The truth remains that the apostle was the champion of personal freedom and universal brotherhood, and his message has a permanent value for all men and every age. For him Christ's truth was inexhaustible, and it is inconceivable that he could have believed that there was any realm of life or activity which was alien to the rule of his Master. Art and science, industry and enterprise, the family, the community, the state, questions of war and defence, and of international relations—the problems of home conditions, the circumstances of social life, pauperism, unemployment, intemperance, impurity, the regulation of labour, the protection of the hapless, and the provision for the aged and infirm—all come within the range of a Christian ethic, and are to be viewed and interpreted in the light of divine revelation. We are surely true to the spirit and teaching of Paul when we affirm with a modern writer that “the future of the state lies with that creed which teaches that all men are equal before their Father in heaven, and that highest and lowest alike, sinners yet heirs of everlasting life, are united as brothers by a common hope in a common salvation.”²

¹ Malcolm Spencer, *Social Degradation*, p. 166.

² F. W. Bussell, *Christian Theology and Social Progress*, Bampton Lectures for 1905.

CHAPTER XIII

RELATION TO GOD, THE CHURCH AND THE FUTURE

AT the beginning of the section upon Duties and Spheres we made a threefold division of duty—individual, social and religious, or duty to self, duty to others, and duty to God. The division, as we remarked, if convenient, is not quite logical. All duties are really religious duties, and in being true to ourselves, and just and merciful towards others, we are really fulfilling the requirements of God. According to Christ true life is doing the will of our Father. According to Paul it is walking worthy of God, who hath called us into His kingdom and glory.¹ All morality is ultimately religious obligation, religion being, as one has said, the Godward side of morality, and morality the manward side of religion. But this view of life as always and everywhere grounded in divine obligation need not prevent us, as it certainly did not prevent Paul, from viewing certain acts both of an individual and social nature as in a peculiar sense, duties towards God. We have already alluded to some of these duties in treating of the ideal of the new life and in dealing with the aids to the culture of character. In this chapter, therefore, we need only refer to some further aspects of the

¹ 1 Thess. ii. 12.

moral life which in the view of the apostle are regarded as standing in special and peculiar relation to the divine Being, and are manifested in our love and service of Him. For when we speak of duty to God we must remember that the word "duty" most inadequately describes our relation to Him. There is no such thing as *mere* duty to God. We never indeed do our duty to God until we cease to do it—as duty. He who only does what is right from a sense of obligation does not do what is right at all. Goodness which is only the dictate of necessity is not really goodness. In relation to God, as indeed in all our other relationships, Paul's own great saying is true, "love is the fulfilling of the law." And as it is in Christ God reveals His love to us, so Christ becomes the medium through which our love returns to Him.

I.

Only in two passages does Paul speak directly of our love to Christ.¹ The love which faith appropriates is in fact the love with which Christ has loved us, and the resulting new life is a life of faith in Christ, who for love's sake has laid down His life for us.² He who died, the just for the unjust, that grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life,³ awakens in us a reciprocal love, so that we no longer live to ourselves, but to Him who died and rose again.⁴ The grateful love thus roused in us becomes a joyful memory,⁵ and causes us to dedicate our life to Him, and indeed to be willing for His sake to part with all things.⁶ This love takes form in us as reverent devotion and thankful praise, "speaking to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual

¹ Eph. vi. 24. ; 1 Cor. xvi. 22.² Gal. ii. 20.³ Rom. v. 21.⁴ 2 Cor. v. 14.⁵ 2 Tim. ii. 8.⁶ Phil. iii. 7.

songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord.”¹ For He to whom we yield ourselves in love is indeed God, God’s only begotten Son, the image of the Father, the Prince of the redeemed,² in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.³ He is at the right hand of God making intercession for us, and by His power we are able to do all things.⁴ But He is also our brother man, our humanity exalted to the highest, the norm and ideal of what man has it in him to be. So love to Him takes the further form of striving to be like Him, of seeking to follow in His steps. We seek to have the mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus, to attain unto the perfect man, that is unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.⁵

It is because of this unique relation of Christ to the divine nature and to our humanity that He comes to fill for the apostle the whole horizon, becomes his “universe which sees and knows.” “For me to live is Christ.” Nothing indeed can exceed the exalted position which Paul claims for Christ in our regard. The statement of Weinel—“on the whole Jesus stands for Paul below God”⁶—is not, we think, borne out by the scripture he quotes in its support—the passage in 1 Corinthians and that in Philippians ii. In the former passage it is true the apostle says that when all things have been subjected unto Christ, then shall even the Son be subjected unto Him that God may be all in all. But these words, so far from implying, as Weinel says, that there are two separate beings, one in a position of final subjection to the other, emphasize rather the truth of final unity. The day of the self-emptying of the humiliation is over. Its fruits

¹ Eph. v. 19.² Eph. i. 20-23.³ Col. ii. 3.⁴ Rom. viii. 34.⁵ Eph. iv. 13.⁶ *St. Paul: The Man and His Work*, p. 322.

are gathered in, and now at last the Godhead has come to its own again. The grand consummation is at length accomplished. God once more is all in all. As little does the title "Son of God" so frequently used by Paul, imply inferiority. The name usually implies a special and unique relation to the Father, is indeed often used simply as a designation of the divine nature of the Messiah. Of course the Christ of Paul's faith has an earthly history, and, from the very fact that He submitted to human experiences, there must be in the apostle's mind some kind of distinction between the idea of God in His absolute nature and the Son in His human relationship. But it is difficult to see how a careful student of Paul's writings can affirm that "he never forgot the barrier between the Christ and God Himself."¹ Rather we should say that Paul never forgets the great and solemn fact that Christ has all the value of God. Jesus is everywhere by him endowed with divinity. He is always represented not only as the head and crown of the human race, but as Creator and Redeemer alike. To Him belong all the power and wisdom and glory of the Godhead. In Him the trusting soul is in touch with the last and highest reality in the universe. He meets us everywhere. We never turn in faith to God but straightway we are met by Christ. The rediscovery of Christ is the note of modern theology. But we must not forget that Paul was the first explorer in the realm of Christology, the first real revealer of the Christ. And if in our attempt to make Christ real to the present age, we divest Him of those divine attributes in which Paul reveals Him, we are grasping a phantom only, portraying a mutilated and emasculated Christ.² "Christ," says one

¹ Weinle, p. 325.

² Cp. the whole argument of Prof. Denney in his *Jesus and the Gospel*.

of our latest and most eloquent theologians, "is more precious to us by what distinguishes Him from us than by what identifies Him with us."¹ Long ago Athanasius said: "The Saviour and the Creator must be one: no half God can redeem those whom very God has made. The absolute revealer must be that which He reveals." On ethical grounds, therefore, not less than theological and religious, we need to work out afresh the doctrine of the Person of our Lord. The real task which lies before the Christian thinker of to-day is the construction of a new Christology, to translate into the idiom which appeals to the modern mind, the truth which in Paul's hands proved its power to unbuild the old world and build a new, viz. that the man Christ Jesus is Sovereign of the universe, King in every realm of life, Lord of Earth and Heaven, of this life and that which is to come. He was not content to be a God "safe beyond the stars." The eternal God became one of us, God coming into humanity that humanity might be taken up into God. For this He sits enthroned and invested with praise. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."² This was Paul's Gospel. This, and nothing less than this, can be ours and authoritatively meet the moral and intellectual needs of man.

Such then being the position Paul assigns to Christ, we can understand how Christ comes in practice to have for the apostle all the value of God and can see how the Christian's obligations to his Father are conditioned and

¹ P. T. Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*.

² Phil. ii. 9-11.

governed by his connection with His divine Son. In exercising his love to Christ the Christian is but loving God, revealed to him through Christ, as his Father. As Rothe truly says, "love to God in order to be virtuous goodness (*tugendhafte Frommigkeit*) must be determined by our love to the Redeemer. God is reflected for us in Christ, in His full truth and purity, so that we simply copy the outlines of our image of God from the personal appearance of our Redeemer."¹ Or as the apostle himself says, the love with which we yield ourselves to God is a living unto God through Jesus Christ.² When we give thanks to God our Father it is always through Him who is the Mediator and channel of all Godward affections and activities. In doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus we are really giving thanks to God by Him.³

According to Paul love to God is an emotion of the heart which rests on knowledge and results in surrender to His will. This emphasis on knowledge—true knowledge not divorced from its intuitional constituents and checked at every point by its ethical results—is a distinctive feature of Paul's teaching. For him all right relations and duties on the part of man to God are based on intelligent understanding of the Divine Being and character. Man must serve God as well as praise Him "with the understanding also." Man must cling to God not with his weakness only but also with his strength, must love Him with heart and soul and *mind*. Mere blind superstitious dread of the unknown, such as the heathen have, is no worthy or proper feeling for those who walk in the light of Christ. A rational devotion, a reasonable service is the Christian demand. Nor can man really reverence the unknown or yield himself in

¹ Rothe, *Theol., Ethik* 3, p. 359.

² Rom. vi. 11.

³ Col. iii. 17 ; Rom. i. 8 ; cp. Hofmann, *Schriftbeweiss*, ii. 2, p. 360.

the utter loyalty which religion requires to a great "Perhaps." It must be remembered, however, that Paul will not for a moment admit that God can ever be wholly unknown. Even the heathen, he says, are not without some sense of the divine, a vague consciousness of power in creation and life, as may be seen in their readiness to offer their worship to visible objects, to images of men and birds and beasts. Apart from direct revelation there was enough in the very make and constitution of the world to lead men to know and worship the Divine Being. God has never left Himself without a witness. There is in every man a principle akin to the divine nature, an affinity for God. The altar to the unknown God which Paul found in Athens was a testimony to the universality and power of this instinct in the natural heart of man. If therefore in their pride and self-sufficiency the heathen refused to recognize God and perverted such knowledge as they had into idolatry, then they were not inexcusable. Spiritual beings they had denied their higher affinities and had offered their worship to the merely natural, to the creature instead of the Creator; and so the light that was in them was changed into darkness. "Since they cared not to retain God in their knowledge, He gave them over to a reprobate mind." For like "the sorrowful great gift" of will, knowledge lays on its subjects the dread burden of responsibility and places in the hands of its possessors the keys alike of darkness and of light. We taste of the fruits of the tree,

"And withal we are conscious of evil
And good—of the spirit and the clod,
Of the power in our hearts of a devil,
Of the power in our souls of a God."

For Paul even the logic of the understanding, the bare intellectual power, has its value as well as its responsibility.

He regards it as a possible stage in the way to higher and spiritual knowledge. Upon it the apostle frequently bases his appeal to heathen inquirers. He points to the witness afforded by nature to the one living God. At Lystra he contrasts the dumb idols with the power which manifests itself everywhere in the works of creation and providence.¹ At Athens he dwells also on the testimony to God which nature affords and advances to the idea of a supreme invisible Lord who is the source of all life. In the first chapter of Romans this line of argument is carried further, and the visible world is shown to be an actual revelation of the Divine Being.

“But the apostle chiefly rests on the inward witness, the deep-seated moral and religious instincts which are present in all men alike. Even with the worthless Felix he could reason of temperance, righteousness, and judgment, knowing that he would awaken a response. The heathen had received no supernatural revelation, but they had a law written in their hearts—a moral sense whereby they were able to discern what was true and honourable and lovely and of good report. Amidst their worst vices the conscience within them bore witness to God’s will—“their thoughts all the while accusing or else excusing one another.” It was this natural religious instinct which Paul took as his starting-point in his missionary preaching. What the Law had done for the Jews, conscience had done for the Gentiles. It had brought home to them the sense of guilt, and kept before them an ideal of righteousness to which they could not attain by their own endeavours. The possession of it made them amenable to God’s judgment no less than the Jews; and to them therefore the gospel of Christ offered itself

¹ Acts xiv. 17.

with a direct significance, as the power of God unto salvation.”¹

But this “natural religious instinct” is only a stage on the way to intelligent spiritual worship. The intellectual recognition of God as the living and true God, from whom everything comes, by whom everything is sustained, and in whom everything has its being and end,² is mediated in believers through the experience of God’s love towards them in Christ in whom He is reconciled with the world. This experience not only reveals to men the absolute majesty of God, but enables them to acknowledge with wonder and admiration especially three great attributes of the divine character which the Son of God has manifested through His life and work; His *Power*, in that He has brought light out of darkness and called things that are not into being;³ His *Wisdom*, in that He has, in ways past comprehension, achieved His wonderful plan of redemption; and His *Justice* and *Mercy*, in that He has made salvation available for all men. Knowledge therefore passes into faith, and that again into adoring wonder and praise as the intelligent believer contemplates the mystery and greatness of God. With a heart charged with emotion he exclaims, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things. To Him be the glory for ever.”⁴

1. The love of God which is thus begotten of knowledge and admiration manifests itself generally according to the apostle in various forms.

(1) *Thankfulness*. “Let the peace of God rule in

¹ E. F. Scott, *The Apologetic of the New Testament*, p. 118.

² Rom. xi. 36.

³ Rom. iv. 17; 2 Cor. iv. 6.

⁴ Rom. xi. 33-36.

your hearts . . . and be ye thankful,"¹ Paul writes to the Colossians. Thankfulness is not in the first instance an act so much as an emotion of the heart. God is recognized to be the great benefactor, and gratitude is the responsive feeling which wells up in the hearts of those who have experienced His goodness. Paul would have the Colossians not only "walk worthy of God and bear fruit in every good work," but above all "give thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His Son."² "They are to abound in thanksgiving,"³ "to give thanks always for all things."⁴ In fact, there is not an epistle in which this spirit of gratitude is not enjoined. It is to be the habitual temper of the Christian. We live in a world, Paul seems to say, where everything speaks to us of divine love and care. All things work together for good, and if we have only the mind to interpret and the heart to respond to God's gracious purposes, there is nothing in all this varying drama of existence for which we may not thank our Heavenly Father. We may thank Him for the changing seasons, for food and raiment, and all temporal good; we may rejoice even in our tribulations, knowing that they work patience and probation and hope.⁵ In short, "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."⁶

(2) With thankfulness towards God the deepest *Humility* is closely united. Paul does not actually use the word of the Christian attitude to God. Rather *ταπεινοφροσύνη* is always employed by him in relation

¹ Col. iii. 15.² Col. i. 12.³ Col. vi. 6.⁴ Eph. v. 20.⁵ Rom. v. 3.⁶ Col. iii. 17.

to our fellow-men, as in Eph. iv. 1-2, Phil. ii. 3, Col. iii. 12. But in the feeling of dependence upon God, in the habitual consciousness of sin, in the sense of demerit and undeservedness accompanying the believer's acceptance of salvation, in the attitude of trust and reverence, there is implied that spirit, not indeed of dread or cringing awe experienced by the guilty, but of lowliness and humility and godly fear, which every true child of God must possess as he meditates upon the majesty and grace of his Father in heaven.

(3) To gratitude and humility there is allied a spirit of *Trustfulness*. The prevailing feeling of the believer is one of confidence in the good faith of God. The more his knowledge of the nature of the Almighty and His relation to the world increases, the more his experience of God's love in Christ grows, so much the stronger will his assurance become that God is true and will fulfil all that He has promised. "Faithful is He that called, who will also do it."¹ He will perfect all things. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not freely give us all things?"² The apostle repeatedly tells his readers that they may rely without hesitation upon God. He will give them everything they need—the spirit of wisdom and revelation, strength and support in the way of salvation, guidance and help in the work of the Lord, protection and deliverance in temptation and peril, and at last eternal life and an abundant entrance into the kingdom.³ This spirit of trustfulness evinces itself, therefore, in *Patience* in suffering (Rom. v. 3-5), in *surrender* to God (Phil. ii. 17), in *Contentment* with what God gives (1 Tim. vi. 6),

¹ 1 Thess. v. 24.

² Rom. viii. 32.

³ Eph. i. 17-19; Col. i. 9; Eph. iii. 16; 1 Cor. x. 13; 1 Cor. iii. 6 ff.; 2 Cor. i. 9; Phil. i. 19; 2 Tim. iv. 7-8; Tit. i. 2.

and in *Hope* both in this life and that which is to come (1 Cor. xiii. 13, Rom. v. 4, 1 Thess. v. 8-9).

Trustfulness will induce in general a two-fold frame of mind towards God.

(1) On the one hand, it will save us from *immature judgment*. "Judge nothing before the time," says the apostle. It will restrain men from attributing to God purposes or acts which appear contrary to their moral ideas. As one has well said, "God's universe is still like unfinished architecture before our eyes; and one must be possessed of the whole conception of the architect to be able to judge correctly the uncompleted work with its broken lines and apparently unrelated parts. Lines of the incomplete creation which now are separate may meet in some perfect arch beyond our sight."¹ We must remember that love is always love, that

Every cloud that spreads above
And veileth love itself is love,²

and that, therefore, we should wait the eternal issues, assured that while we may not understand the mysteries that surround us, there can be nothing in the character or ways of God that will ultimately contradict those primal ethical conceptions which He has implanted in us. We have a right to assume that moral truth is one and the same in man and in God; and though there is much that must perplex us because of our limited knowledge, we may trust God with our whole heart and interpret His ways and purposes in the light of Jesus Christ.

(2) And, on the other hand, this trustfulness obliges us to *refer all our conduct and endeavour to God* as to one who is supremely interested in our lives, and to whom successful achievement is well-pleasing. It will make

¹ Newman Smyth, *Christian Ethics*, p. 475.

² Tennyson.

us view our whole life as a probation involving our responsibility, and as a divine education which is fitting us for that type of goodness and happiness both here and hereafter allotted to each of us by God. It will impress us above all with the idea that life is not merely a passive surrender but an active service, a doing of the will of God to which we have been called by His grace.¹ All these aspects of life in relation to God find expression in the epistles of Paul. Life is a discipline, a chastening under the hand of God. But it is in keeping with the practical mind of the apostle that he continually represents it also as a personal endeavour, a work in which each must engage. It is God, indeed, who fashions every man, working in him both to will and to do, but he himself must be a co-worker with God, working out his own salvation with fear and trembling. Paul exhorts his readers to place their entire trust in God, to accept everything, even affliction, as from His hand, to fear Him, to wait upon Him, to yield themselves to Him; but the true sacrifice that is well-pleasing to God is not any passive acquiescence or ceremonial offering, but the hearty and active dedication of body, soul, and mind to His service.

2. No account of the relation of the new life to God would be complete which omitted the special duties of *worship* centring in prayer and the observance of the sacraments, and *witness-bearing*. But as the former of these belongs more to the religious than to the ethical teaching of Paul, it may be passed over here with the remark that to the apostle as well as to his Master it was not only the high privilege and holy means of spiritual culture, but above all else the distinguishing mark of a genuine Christian. Worship is the conscious

¹ Rom. xii. 1.

outgoing of the whole man to his Maker, and it attains its highest exercise in prayer. Prayer does not bring God down to man, but it lifts man up to God. "It is the sublime significancy of prayer," says Wuttke, "that it brings into prominence man's great and high destiny, that it heightens his consciousness of his true moral nature in relation to God: and as all morality depends on our relation to God, prayer is, in fact, the very life-blood of morality."¹ Paul, like all the other writers of Scripture, represents prayer as the most essential of moral requirements. We are to pray without ceasing—not, indeed, that we are to be continually uttering in articulate language the desires of our heart. But there is to be a constant aspiring of the soul to God as to one whose will alone is our law, and whose blessing is granted to whatsoever is done in His name. The true prayer, both in its spirit and content, is that which the believer offers as a child of God in the name of Christ. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father."²

Besides the requirement of worship there rests upon the Christian also the duty of *Witness-bearing*—representing the grace and glory of God to man in his life and action. Christians are to be epistles of Christ, His transcripts, known and read of all men.³ They are to manifest God's love to the world, and by their confession and avowal, as well as by their whole life and conversation, to commend the Gospel,⁴ showing themselves a pattern of good work,⁵ and adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things.⁶

¹ *Christian Ethics*, vol. ii. p. 221.

² Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 15.

⁴ 1 Tim. iv. 12.

⁵ Titus ii. 7.

³ 2 Cor. iii. 3.

⁶ Titus ii. 10.

II.

The duties of worship and witness-bearing find their highest expression in the *Church*—the religious life of the community. These are the ends for which the Church exists. In worship it looks Godward on behalf of man; in witness-bearing it looks manward on behalf of God. Though the apostle uses the expression “kingdom of God”—the leading idea of our Lord’s teaching—it is the term “church” which he more frequently employs. These terms may be regarded as practically equivalent, although the “kingdom” possesses a more ideal and transcendental character than the Church. In general we may say that the Christian Church as conceived by Paul was “a society of men united by a common faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour and a common devotion to Him as their Lord, gathered together from all classes, conditions, and races of men.”¹ Without entering upon a consideration of the doctrine of the Church—its constitution, government, and order—which belongs to the pastoral rather than the ethical teaching of Paul, and is treated with great fulness in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, it will be sufficient for us to note the impressive figures by which the apostle portrays the Christian community, and draw some inferences from them.

He likens the Church to a *glorious temple*, of which Christ is at once the foundation and the chief cornerstone, and of which the living stones are those who bear Christ’s name and have consecrated their lives to His service. Paul must often have beheld the splendid examples of Grecian architecture in the various cities he visited, but it is significant that it is in writing to the

¹ Cp. Bruce, *St. Paul’s Conception of Christianity*, p. 368.

Ephesians that he employs the simile of a building, for in Ephesus there stood before the daily gaze of its citizens the great temple of Diana, at once the most stately and most famous in the world of that day; and what more natural than that he should remind his Ephesian brethren that, humble and insignificant as they might feel themselves and their religion to be in contrast to all that that imposing heathen structure stood for, they too had a temple built upon a sure foundation, of which each faithful life was a living and abiding stone.¹

He compares the Church again to the *bride of Christ*. Knit to Him by His love and sacrifice, sanctified by His word and made by union with Him, whose glory and likeness the Church reflects, holy and without blemish,² Paul would have his brethren realize the tender and close relationship in which they stand to Christ. As husband and wife are one, so Christ and His Church are one. He gives of His best to them; let them give of their best to Him. One in heart and purpose, let them dwell with Him in holy union, fulfilling their Lord's ideal and enabling Him "to present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."³

Finally, Paul designates the Church the *body of Christ*, of which the Redeemer Himself is the head, and believing men and women are the articulated members vitally related to the head and to one another in fellowship and service.⁴

These of course are ideal pictures. There is a constant effort on the part of Paul to contemplate the Church "in the bright light of the ideal, and not in the dim disenchanting light of vulgar reality." He was well aware that the actual congregations as they existed in the

¹ Eph. ii. 19-21.

² Eph. v. 22.

³ Eph. v. 27.

⁴ 1 Cor. xii. 27; Eph. iv. 5, 13.

different localities of the world exposed to the temptations of their environment, fell very far short of these emblems. But, notwithstanding, he delighted to invest the Church with the attributes of the divine kingdom, and he never ceased to hold up before his fellow-Christians the high ideal of what they ought to be and might yet become.

There were, in particular, two main ideas which he sought by means of these figures to impress upon the scattered congregations of believers: the one was their *difference* from the world; the other was their *unity* in Christ.

(1) They were to preserve their *separateness* from heathenism. It is true that Paul acknowledged himself to be the apostle of the Gentiles, and he desired to claim the whole of mankind for Christ. But as a matter of fact he, first of all, instituted a clearly defined boundary-line between the world and the Christian community. The Gospel was preached in a world that was wholly hostile to it, and those whom Christ had emancipated from the thralldom of sin had entered upon a new life and henceforth belonged to a different kingdom from the surrounding mass of heathenism. They had identified themselves with a heavenly order, and they formed a society different from all others, entirely separate from the world and standing for aims and ideals of a spiritual nature which the heathen could not appreciate. Paul, as we have seen, enjoined a respectful and conciliatory attitude on the part of Christians towards pagan society, but, underlying this formal complacence, it was never to be forgotten that the Church was a separate community, a kingdom by itself. It asked only to be left alone, to be allowed to follow its own aims unmolested. It had nothing in common with heathen practices, and by its aloofness and general lack of sympathy with the social

customs and worldly pursuits and recreations of the people, it incurred the suspicion of being a secret and revolutionary organization, and, at a later period, even provoked the persecution of the state. Hence the more loyal to their faith Christians were, the more did they feel that they were aliens in a strange land, citizens of another kingdom and subjects of another king.

(2) But while guarding their separateness from the world believers were to cherish, all the more on that very account, the *sense of unity* with one another and with Christ. Each single congregation was encouraged to look upon itself not as a self-existent body, but as a part of a larger whole. Jerusalem was to be regarded as the mother-church, of which the separate congregations were daughters. This family relation is illustrated by the collection which Paul started on behalf of the necessitous brethren of Palestine. Thus by practical expressions of sympathy and liberality, by the visits of Paul and his co-workers to the isolated local churches, and by the circulation of pastoral letters, the sense of the fraternity of all the congregations throughout the world was maintained. Each community, however weak and unimportant it might be in itself, was sustained and encouraged in its church life by the thought that it was a member of a great and widespread organization.

It was, however, within the individual congregations that this feeling of brotherhood and union was chiefly to be cultivated. In their everyday life, in their common relationships, and above all in their meetings for communion, prayer, and thanksgiving, this consciousness of kinship and fraternity would find expression. They could not but feel that they stood nearer to one another than to their worldly neighbours. They were bound in a relation of mutual love and helpfulness. The fruit of

the Spirit was love, and the Church proved itself to be a spiritual community by resting its whole organization on the law of brotherly love. And as they were united as brethren, it naturally followed that all feelings of inequality, all distinctions of race and class were to be abolished. There is, however, no evidence that the communal life, in which the brethren had all things in common, which prevailed for a short period in the first Pentecostal days, existed in Paul's time. On the contrary, there is every reason to infer that brotherly equality among Christians was not understood as involving the removal of civil and social distinctions. "Even in the life peculiar to the community, in the religious domain itself—the interchange of gifts with which each served the other and the whole—that equality by no means signified identity in position. . . . Variety of honour and even of value was not thereby removed. . . . It was the variety of the members that secured the co-operation of forces, and the unified composition of one body."¹ The strong were taught to help the weak, and the weak were encouraged to believe that their service was indispensable for the whole. Rich and poor, high and low, alike were incited to mutual sympathy and support, and called upon to realize that, whatever their outward differences might be, as spiritual beings they were equal before God.

(3) The bond of union was their common relationship with God in Christ. They were animated by one spirit and sustained by one purpose. They had one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.² The Christian life was a life in the Spirit. Those who shared it belonged to a higher world than the natural and material. While actually existing upon the earth, they were to be men whose home was in heaven, and whose real interests

¹ Weizsäcker, *Apostolic Age*, vol. ii. p. 383.

² Eph. iv. 5, 6.

lay in an unseen world. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and grace in the Holy Ghost. A supernatural element was to colour even their ordinary life. They were to live under the power of the world to come. Risen with Christ, they were to set their affections on things which were above. Heavenly-mindedness was to be the habitual frame of those who had consecrated their hearts to Christ.

III.

Even in this life the Christian could experience something of this exaltation, but it was in the next that it would be completely realized. Hence along with faith and love Paul repeatedly lays stress upon *hope* as a distinguishing feature of the Christian. It lies beyond the scope of our subject to consider the eschatology of the apostle, save in so far as his view of the last things reacted upon his ethical teaching. Paul himself believed, and he constantly taught his friends to believe, that the Lord was at hand, and that the end of all earthly things was speedily to come. The hope which he inculcated was nothing less than the completion of communion with God, and participation in the full bliss and glory of His kingdom which Christ had begun in the hearts of believers. But this hope, so far from creating in Christians apathy or recklessness, was to make them more faithful in duty, more patient in trial, and, above all, more watchful and expectant. It was to be an active hope, which was to be combined with the work of faith and labour of love.¹ Paul indeed says that life is short and that the fashion of this world is passing away, but he does not draw the conclusion which many, believers and unbelievers alike,

¹ 1 Thess. i. 3.

have drawn—that, because life is short, it is worthless too. His teaching lends no support to that sentimental longing for the time when earthly things shall trouble no more. The inference which he would have his readers draw is not that life, being a thing so soon to be done with, is of no value and may be despised. On the contrary, his idea seems to be that, because life is short, it has all the greater worth. The sense of how swiftly our days are passing is not to quench life's interests, but to impart to them a significance all the higher and keener because they will soon be beyond our power. Every experience of life may have some moral bearing on character, and the very brevity of life ought to make us the more earnest lest any of its spiritual possibilities be missed.

Of the future life Paul has little to say. The traditional apocalyptic imagery seems not to have had much charm for him. He offers no detailed picture of the world to come. Unlike Peter and the author of the Revelation he depicts neither the terrors of hell nor the joys of heaven. A fine reserve marks every allusion to the life that is to be. He does not shirk the thought of death, but neither does he fondle it. He turns his gaze calmly from the end of things to the tasks of the present. As he himself met death, he would have others face it. Until almost the last it was his firm conviction that he would not undergo that experience, but with his contemporaries "be changed," caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord. But as time wore on, and as peril after peril confronted him, he came to contemplate the possibility of his dying. If he had any physical shrinking from that experience, it was but a momentary feeling, quickly thrust aside, and he triumphantly writes to the Corinthians, "We know that when this earthly tabernacle

is dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

A calm confidence characterizes the outlook of the apostle. Beyond the temporal and the seen there lurks for him no unknown terror, there yawns no dark abyss. Behind the veil God is, and he who lives with Him now will dwell with Him hereafter. His earthly experience stands in vital relation to his eternal hope. If we are Christ's the future is ours as well as the present. Nothing can separate us from His love.

The stars come nightly to the sky
The tidal wave into the sea,
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high
Can keep my own away from me.

Paul had no fear, and he seeks to impart to his friends his own splendid courage. Even when he is in imprisonment at Rome and is looking forward to the lictor's axe, we are impressed with the note of triumphant joy which thrills through the epistles of that time, and particularly in the letter to the Philippians. He is willing to serve his Master both in life and in death. For him "to live is Christ and to die is gain." It is indeed remarkable, as has been pointed out, that in spite of his excessive hardships and unremitting labours, amid which it were only human if he should at times become a prey to loneliness and depression, there is no evidence of that morbid yearning for death, which became a feature of not a few of the martyrs of the early church. His whole desire is to serve his brethren, and he is ready to go or stay as the Lord may will. He knows that when his course is finished and the battle of life is over, there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness. But in the meantime, with the heroism of a true soldier of Christ, he

will not desert his post or abate his efforts till God's call comes.

Paul himself is, indeed, the grandest exemplar of his own ethic. His teaching is the outcome of his life. It is his attitude to God that determines his relation to man. Fidelity to the least inspired by love to the highest—that was the burden of his ethical message as it was the note of his moral life.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ETHICAL ULTIMATE OF ST. PAUL

IN these studies which we now bring to a close, we have aimed at presenting the apostle not so much as the great theologian who leads our minds into the profound mysteries of God's revelation, but rather as the practical teacher of morals, to whom no incident of experience is secular and no duty insignificant, because all things belong to God and all life is dominated by the spirit of Christ. For Paul the final test of Christianity is its applicability to life. A mere doctrine of atonement or a theory of justification, beautiful, logical and symmetrical as it might be in verbal statement, is but a beating of the air if it cannot be translated into conduct. Life is everywhere the measure of doctrine and love the index of belief; and to this ultimate touchstone Paul did not hesitate to bring every truth he declared.

But the originality and the uniqueness of Paul's ethical teaching are to be sought not so much in the range of its practical application, as in its unfolding of an ideal which is at once the Power and the Pattern of the new life. That ideal is Christ in Whom the perfect life is seen and through Whom the power for its realization is communicated. This latter feature is central to Paul, and is, indeed, the supreme purpose and aim in his interpretation

of Christianity. "The Gospel is not merely a revelation of the divine nature, rich, satisfying, many-sided, and corresponding profoundly to the complex needs of humanity. It is a principle of life, of energy, of movement; it heightens vitality; it makes for efficiency in work and for greatness of character."¹ "The Gospel," says Paul to the Romans, "is the *power* of God unto salvation";² and again to the Corinthians, "the kingdom of God is not in word but in *power*."³ The most distinctive and pregnant idea underlying Paul's teaching is the idea of a self-communication of God to man; and for him Christianity culminates in the doctrine of the indwelling of God in humanity, the might of the spirit working in human hearts, and strengthening them to receive, to act, and to endure. Paul tells the Ephesians that "they need something more effectual than knowledge, more sustaining than the temper of tranquil dependence on God, more stimulating even than fellowship in a holy community. They need, and the Gospel of Christ offers them, the gift of the indwelling Presence of the Deity. What, therefore, the apostle seeks for them in his prayer is a capacity not so much to act as to receive, strength to open the door without reserve to One who comes not primarily to instruct or to console, but to make for Himself a habitation in the inmost recesses of man's personality; to dwell there in the fulness of divine force, as a transforming and enabling principle of life."⁴

It is noteworthy that the word "power" continually recurs in the apostle's writings as a keynote of his teaching. The gift of power is represented as the end of all God's dealings with man and as the highest manifestation of human personality. Paul felt himself to be

¹ Ottley, *Christian Ideas and Ideals*, p. 381.

² Rom. i. 16.

³ 1 Cor. iv. 20.

⁴ Ottley, p. 382.

a living monument of redemptive might, and his most characteristic message both to churches and individuals was, "quit you like men, be strong,"¹ "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,"² "Be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ."³

Now in the new life as Paul experienced and explained it, this element of power is at once source and stream. Power is present where the water first takes its lonely rise from the living rock to far down where the river flows in volume by the busy haunts of man. Power is the spring of character, and in character power is manifested. The hidden life of God passes into the Christian's personality, becomes indeed so thoroughly an integral part of the man that his moral character, instead of being merely an adjunct of faith or an external acquirement (as it is in so many systems of morals) becomes the spontaneous outflow, the automatic expression of the new germ of life within the soul. Once Christ is in the heart of a man, strong decisive moral action proceeds by the working of a natural principle and is the direct and irresistible expression of the inner spirit of life. It is through the dynamic of the living Christ that the divine life in the Christian first begins; and it is by the same divine energy interfused through the whole personality and dominating at every moment the entire man that the Christian is made forceful and vigorous, and is enabled to meet and deal effectively with the ever new conditions of life which confront him in the world.

But this quality of power is not only the root but also the fruit of the new life. Power is the distinguishing feature of the Christian personality. The prevailing impression which the character of Jesus made upon His

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

² Eph. vi. 10.

³ 2 Tim. ii. 1.

contemporaries was that of power. "What manner of man is this?" so they spoke wondering. "His word is with power; He teaches with authority." Behind all the tenderness, patience, and compassion of Jesus, men were conscious of this quality of energy and self-mastery—the reserve force of a commanding personality. And what Jesus Himself was He promised to make His disciples. "To them He gave power to become the Sons of God." Paul sees clearly the necessity of this quality, and discovers in it the prime secret of his own life and ministry—"according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification."¹ He will even glory in his infirmities if by means of them he may become a stronger man, that the power of Christ may rest upon him.² Character for the apostle means effectiveness, force, capacity for service, and Christian manhood is not only life, but life at the full. Christ is for Paul the only begotten of such life. His is the grace that is sufficient for a man, His the strength that is perfected in weakness. He it is that transmutes our very frailties and disabilities into invincible instruments of power, so that each may say as Paul said, "when I am weak then am I strong." This is the strange paradox of the new life which the apostle never wearies reiterating—that there is imparted to the feeble, the humble-minded, the distrustful, to ordinary people, common men and women, a new gift—the gift of power; a new force—the force of life, of character, of service. And this is St. Paul's distinctive message to our age. "What the world is waiting for," says Prof. Peabody, "is an accession of spiritual power." It is efficiency, moral force, strength of character, "the motive power of idealism," that is demanded by the perplexing circumstances of modern social and industrial life, and it is this only

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 10.² 2 Cor. xii. 9.

which will achieve the ends which institutions, governments, industrial machinery, and political schemes are elaborately striving after.¹ It is idealists, men of spiritual vision, men with the power of God working in and through them, men dedicated to the fearless service of righteousness and love, that are needed to grapple with the problems of our social life and lift the world to a higher level. "How to take command of circumstances instead of being their slave; how to own one's wealth and not be owned by it; how to rule one's spirit as well as to take a city! . . . how to labour together with God instead of becoming a cog in some great machine! how to maintain peace of mind amid the disasters, illusions, and tragedies of experience—this is the cry for power which goes up from many a life, ensnared—as whose is not? in the mechanism and materialism of the world."²

It is this union of vision and power, this fusion of idealism and dynamic force in Pauline ethics, which differentiates it from all other systems in ancient or modern times. Paul did not merely propose to mankind a new ideal, he disclosed a new power as part of that ideal, in virtue of which the ideal realizes itself. The old static view of the moral life has no place in Paul's conception. Given the germ in the soul the new life must follow. Begin with Christ, and you must grow up unto Him in all things. Life is a force. Character is a growth, a flower which unfolds and expands from a hidden seed. Hence in Paul's teaching all apathy, passivity, inaction, negation, which occupy such an important place in the moral conceptions of Buddhism,

¹ See also, Jones' *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, chap. vi. and pp. 296 ff.

² Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*, p. 152.

Neo-Platonism, Stoicism, and even of mediaeval Catholicism, play no part. On the contrary, all is life, energy, untiring activity, and unceasing endeavour. "This one thing I do, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ"—that is the motto of Paul's own life, as it is the watchword and challenge of his whole ethical appeal. And yet it is characteristic of him that he represents this endeavour as no merely human effort. It is a divine power working in and through the human. It is a co-operation, and yet it is something deeper, something more integral and organic. Man is animated by a new principle of life. It is God that worketh in him both to will and to do. The Christ within pervades and dominates all the faculties and inspires all the activities of the man. He is no longer himself. He is possessed by a higher power. And yet, in another sense, he is never so much himself; "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The "Christ in me" is at once the ideal and the spring of the new life.

"Yea thro' life, death, sorrow, and thro' sinning
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed:
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."¹

With such an ideal inspiring and ordering the moral life, it is no longer a matter of importance that there are some subjects concerning which the apostle has nothing to say, questions belonging peculiarly to modern conditions of life which do not come within the range of his consciousness. "It does not follow," however, as Prof. Harnack has well said, "from the lack of economic precepts in the gospel that the matter is one which does not concern a Christian." There are many details of

¹ Myers, *Saint Paul*.

modern social life which Paul, like his Lord, does not deal with, many problems of present-day ethics which cannot be decided by a direct reference to chapter and verse either in the gospels or in the epistles. But St. Paul's great principles of human solidarity, of human equality in Christ, of freedom, service, and love; his teaching concerning the Church, the kingdom of God, the family, the state, his precepts with regard to personal purity, the use of wealth and the duty of work, contained the germs of the subsequent renewal of Europe, and still contain the potency of social and political transformation.¹

The importance of Paul's ethical teaching is not that he legislates for every possible situation, but that for him all ethical questions are really religious questions, and that all, even the most material and concrete, are treated *sub specie aeternitatis*. The real danger of our times is the occupation of the people with the merely material work of social reform—a necessary work indeed, but one which threatens to substitute the promise of this life for that which is to come. Those social reformers who discount the importance of individual character and of spiritual ideals, who ignore or despise the social dynamic of spiritual life and love, are doomed to ineffectiveness and disappointment.² In the Pauline ethics, with a courage and thoroughness unparalleled in history, all practical questions are regarded from the divine standpoint, and viewed in the light of Christ's life and teaching.

We claim no finality for Paul. He himself would have claimed none. It was no mechanical and completed moral code he issued. He disclosed a life, and declared

¹ See *The Social Teaching of the Bible*, various authors, p. 22.

² *Ibid.* p. 23.

not obscurely or falteringly Him who was the inspiration of that life. Christ for Paul was the first of Realities, a personal Force unconfined to race or epoch, a Presence living down the centuries and acting in and through the souls of men of every age and clime. The Christianity which Paul taught, just because it has its springs in the living Christ, is an inexhaustible fountain of life, a stream of refreshing and renewal which must expand and grow deeper and broader with the growth of man. The gospel is not only a principle adequate to all conceivable conditions of thought and life, but it itself creates the new experiences and propounds the new questions for which its guidance is sought. The very consciousness of the complexity of life and the manifold difficulties acknowledged in all attempts to combat evil and further good, which is a feature of our age, is itself an evidence of a deeper appreciation of the value of Christianity, and of a more sincere endeavour to make it not merely a nominal counsel of perfection, but an actual working creed. The increased uneasiness of our day in regard to existing conditions of life; the discussions and agitations; the social schemes and projects put forward and debated; the awakening of the public conscience and the deepening sense of responsibility manifest among all classes, in respect of the vice and misery of our large cities, are unmistakable signs that the leaven of practical Christianity is working, it may be not always consciously, in the souls of men. People are beginning to feel that if the gospel is true at all, then nothing is beyond its province, and no problem of life, individual or social, economic, industrial or international, is outside its jurisdiction. "All things are yours," says the apostle, reiterating the comprehensiveness of Jesus the Christ, whose mind it was his mission to interpret: "Whether it be the divisions within the

Church; the questions without the Church, of philanthropy, industry, politics; life with its problems, death with its mysteries, the present with its cares, the future with its hopes—all is yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

But while Paul exhibits unshaken confidence in the invincible might and efficacy of the Gospel of Christ to achieve all individual and social good,¹ his is not the easy assurance of the shallow optimist who is blind to the anomalies of the world. He does not for a moment disguise from himself or others the puzzling perplexity of human nature and the arduousness of life's tasks. He is everywhere haunted with the mystery² of existence—the marvel and strangeness of life and death and the great hereafter. Life is not a simple matter for him. It is no monotone, but a thing of manifold moods and expressions. It is full of contradictions and contrasted experiences, and cannot be explained by a single formula. Light and shadow, joy and sorrow, gloom and glory—all enter into its composition. It is a robe of many colours, a fabric woven of diverse threads. The most opposite qualities are often blended in a single individual, and the most contradictory elements meet even in a single experience. To this ever present sense of mystery and perplexity in life is due the apostle's frequent resort to paradox and antithesis. He almost exhausts the resources of the Greek language, rich as it is in variety of expression, in endeavouring to do justice to his own complex emotions and conflicting states. Paul knew well that

¹ "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13); and again, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. ix. 37).

² The term mystery is used no less than eighteen times by the apostle, and by no other New Testament writer.

there are heights and depths in the human soul which are hidden even from itself and much more from others ;

“ Not e'en the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reason why we smile or sigh.”¹

This consciousness of mystery and contrast in the philosophy of Paul contributes to the grandeur and nobility of his view of life. To the apostle life is a conflict. Flesh and spirit, body and soul, natural impulse and divine principle, the law of our members and the law of our mind, are ever at war, so that when we would do good evil is present with us. The man who does not feel this burden, who is not conscious of this inward anomaly, has not begun to live. It is the opposing moments of life's antithesis which invest its aims and endeavours with moral worth ; and it is this same conflict which, as we watch it unfolding, gives to the drama of human life its irresistible interest. It may deepen to a tragedy or rise to a triumph. For we carry eternity in our hearts ; and it is the infinite of which we are conscious at every moment that imbues our existence at once with its ineffable sadness and its unutterable hope. A man made for God, and with a yearning in him for the divine, can never but be haunted with a sense of dissatisfaction and unrest, and can find no more appropriate terms in which to utter his experience than those of Paul : “ As dying, and, behold, we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowing, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”² “ The good that I would I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do.”³ “ O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the

¹ Keble, *The Christian Year*.

² 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

³ Rom. vii. 20.

body of this death?"¹ "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."²

But though the apostle Paul strikes every note of the diversified experience of man and sweeps with his fingers the whole scale of human emotion, he does not leave us with the impression that life is only a clashing of discords. The music he offers us is fuller and grander, because in it so many and so diverse notes meet and mingle. He plays upon an instrument of many strings, but out of the dissonances come higher harmonies. Undaunted by mystery, challenging evil to do its worst, outbraving anomaly and contradiction, fearing not to sound the minor chords of pain and sorrow, he reaches unity at last,

"The C major of this life."³

The opposites are not suppressed but reconciled. The contrasts are fused into a larger, all-compassing union. Christ, the Son of Man, is for him the light of life, and in the sacrifice of the cross, flesh and spirit, grief and joy, life and death, are brought into unity,

"Dim fragments meant
To be united in some wondrous whole,
Imperfect qualities throughout creation,
Suggesting some one creature yet to make,
Some point where all the scattered rays should meet,"⁴

are taken up and harmonized. Nor does the man in Christ part with a single element of his full humanity. The natural is transmuted into the spiritual, the earthly into the heavenly. The "old man" remains, but with a changed character, his former affections and lusts crucified. The "old self" is preserved, but, purged of selfishness,

¹ Rom. vii. 24.

² Rom. vii. 25.

³ Browning, *Abt Vogler*.

⁴ Browning.

which is the root of sin, it is transfigured into a higher, larger selfhood. The old "body" abides, but it is consecrated to nobler uses, and its powers and passions become the instruments of holiness. The old pain persists, nay, often becomes intenser, but it is pain shot through with joy, and, sanctified and sweetened by fellowship with Christ, it is working for us "a far more exceeding weight of glory." Law remains, but robbed of its legalism and fulfilled in love, it is lifted up into the realm of liberty. That mystic word of the apostle, which was the secret of his own complex life, is the solution of all life's mysteries. "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

This unity in diversity, this fearless recognition of the antinomies of life and thought, and the attempt, not to suppress but combine them in a higher synthesis, is acknowledged by every student of St. Paul's philosophy of life, and has made the apostle of the Gentiles a favourite of some of the world's greatest thinkers. Theologians like Origen and Augustine, Anselm and Thomas Aquinas, Calvin and Luther; philosophers like Plotinus, Boehme, Schelling, and Hegel; mystics like St. Bernard, St. Theresa, Tauler, and Thomas á Kempis; poets like Dante, Goethe, and Browning—have found in his utterances the support of their doctrines, the expression of their speculative theories, and the vehicle of their poetic thoughts and feelings.

Profoundest of thinkers and greatest of mystics, the apostle sounds depths the subtlest mind can hardly fathom and scales altitudes at which the ordinary man cannot breathe. He has uttered, as St. Peter says, many things hard to be understood. But this is the very quality in his teaching which constitutes its charm for the thoughtful and aspiring.

The Incarnation with all that it implies for us men is

the great fact to which Paul's whole life and writings bear witness. According to him, Christ is not only the manifestation, but the communication of God's own righteousness and love and eternal life. We may not be able to construe the incarnation in all its necessary co-existences and seeming contradictions to ourselves or others in any final or satisfying theory. But neither can we reject it without denying the eternal truth of the universe and all the higher meanings and purposes of our being. For us, as for Paul, the fact of Christ is central, and it alone binds into one and holds in coherence the conflicting elements of life and destiny. As one has said, "the mystery of the incarnation may be permanently a mystery, in the extremest sense of the term, a fact or actuality which reason cannot construe nor language express; but it is the mystery which solves and illumines all others."

When all is said, between Paul's dogmatics and his ethics there is really no opposition, and religion and morals in regard both to their beginning and end perfectly coincide. The supreme object of faith and knowledge is also the ultimate goal and incentive of all desire and action. "What we mean by God," says Goethe, "is just the best we know": and "a man's real religion," as has been beautifully said, "whatever his verbal creed, is his attitude of mind and will to that which he thinks highest and most real in life. And Christians are those who believe that this highest and most real good of life has been set before them in the image of Christ. They are those who think that it is the meaning and purpose of our existence to bring about a state of society in which all the members shall be working in the Spirit of Christ, in which no one is deprived of his share in the great heritage of man, no one is crushed under the wheels of a

civilization in which he does not partake, and everyone finds his appropriate place and work in the service of the common good. If we are Christians in more than name, we must believe that such a society is possible, nay, that it is what man was made for, and what certainly will yet be realized in the world. And the service of truth for us Christians must be to do our part in bringing about this ideal by making ourselves and others, as far as we can, fit to be citizens in such a kingdom of God upon earth; a kingdom which, far off as it seems, is the desire of all nations, the earnest expectation and object for which all good men now strive, and in the past have been striving, and which perhaps is nearer to us than we think.”¹ Faith is this ideal which may be said to be the very core of the apostle Paul’s ethical teaching, is the incentive and motive-power for the making of individuals and for the transformation of all forms of social life. It begins in time, but it will have its consummation in eternity, of which every stage in the progressive evolution of man is a prophecy and promise. All things are tending towards this goal, and

“Step by step since time began
We see the steady gain of man.”

The manifold resources and labours of the world, the various gifts of civilization, the arts and sciences, thought and enterprise, industry and education, all the efforts for the social and spiritual salvation of mankind—are working together for this great end, the building up of the body of Christ. “The one increasing purpose” of the ages will be consummated when “we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the

¹ Edw. Caird, *Lay Sermons*, p. 42.

fulness of Christ." In the furtherance of this end each individual must take his part according to his station and gifts; and across the centuries there comes to all of us the echo of the apostle's final message to the Church of Corinth as the sum of all his ethical counsel: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."¹

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

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